













**MACEDONIA**



# MACEDONIA

ITS RACES AND THEIR FUTURE

BY

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WITH PHOTOGRAPHS AND TWO MAPS

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TO  
MY MOTHER AND FATHER.





## PREFACE

ONCE during the occupation of Thessaly I watched a Turkish trooper playing in the outskirts of Larissa with some little Greek children. Ragged, unkempt, unsoldierly, he seemed a typical Asiatic. His complexion was swarthy, his nose curved and his curly beard set at that curious angle which one associates with Assyrian bas-reliefs. He may have come of the same stock which followed Darius when the East made its first assault upon European liberties. But the children saw in him only a kindly playmate. They were completely at their ease with him, fearless and confident as they might have been with some great gentle dog. He too was happy, a mere child of nature, a soldier by compulsion and a conqueror by accident. He lifted a little girl upon his shoulder that she might pluck the blossoms of a hawthorn tree. For a moment one almost forgot the barbaric notes of the military band rehearsing its tuneless hymns of conquest and of triumph in the square hard by. But suddenly across the road there appeared the indignant form of a Greek mother. She stood in the doorway of "the Café of Byron and Independence," and a shrill voice called the little girl by name. "Eleftheria, Eleftheria," it shouted, and the golden head of little "Freedom" slid down from the Turk's shoulder. In the harsh accents of a scolding tongue, with words that were a war-cry at Marathon, the mother explained that patriotic children do not play with barbarians. The Turk slouched disappointed away, and little "Freedom" gazed wistfully after him. The baptism of revolt had set an impassable barrier between them.

The memory of this scene comes back to me when I ask myself whether I have succeeded in writing a fair book about the Macedonian question. My sympathies and my friendships are not all on one side. The Turk in his shabby uniform, responsive only to primitive ideals of loyalty and honour, simple, courageous, dignified, and poor, is often a more attractive and picturesque object than the little huckster in European clothes who has called his café after Byron. But it is my weakness that I cannot hear the name of Freedom unmoved, even when it comes from the shrill throat of a Greek mother. All one's æsthetic impulses cry out on behalf of the Mohamedan with his easy, incompetent nature, his indifference to abstractions, his aloofness from the busy ugliness of the modern world. But there come crises in the development of Eastern affairs when one can no longer dally with these romantic preferences. The Macedonian insurrection of 1903 failed in its immediate object, but it created a tension which can only be relieved by the liberation of these miserable provinces. At such a moment it is irrelevant to remember that the Turks have their personal graces and their private virtues. We are concerned with them only as a governing race—a primitive Asiatic people with gaps in their minds and *lacunæ* in their vocabularies. The creed of the rulers is "Islam" (*i.e.*, obedience, resignation). Their subjects baptize their children "Freedom." With all the tolerance in the world we can only say that such an arrangement is hopeless. If it were the subject race which believed in resignation and the victors in freedom, one might expect some measure of happiness. Reverse the position and the results can only be squalor, anarchy, and misery.

My main object is to explain, with what detail is necessary, the nature of Turkish rule as it affects the peasantry of Macedonia. The strife between the Christian races, the rivalry of competing empires, the devastation caused in one form or another by the idea of nationality—all this is interesting, but incomparably less important than the daily sufferings of the villagers who endure in patient obscurity. It matters very little whether a village which was originally

neither Greek nor Bulgarian nor Servian is bribed or persuaded or terrorised into joining one of these national parties. But it does matter profoundly that it should be freed from the oppression of its landlord, its tax-farmer, and the local brigand chief.

I have tried, so far as a European can, to judge both Christians and Turks as tolerantly as possible, remembering the divergence which exists between the standards of the Balkans and of Europe. In a land where the peasant ploughs with a rifle on his back, where his rulers govern by virtue of their ability to massacre upon occasion, where Christian Bishops are commonly supposed to organise political murders, life has but a relative value, and assassination no more than a relative guilt. There is little to choose in bloody-mindedness between any of the Balkan races—they are all what centuries of Asiatic rule have made them. I once discussed the Belgrade murders with an "educated" Turk. He was a Pasha occupying one of the chief military commands in European Turkey, and connected by marriage with the Imperial family. He showed his enlightenment by wearing tweeds and discarding his fez at meals, and he talked a smattering of almost every European tongue save English. He was, of course, profoundly shocked by the murder of a King and Queen, and I happened to remark that the crime after all was quite unnecessary. "It would have been so easy," said I, "to arrest them quietly and ferry them over the Danube into exile." "Yes," said he, "it was very stupid. The civilised thing to do would have been to imprison them, and then quietly, when every one had forgotten about them, to give them poison. Yes. It was a barbarous act!" In a land where the code of the more enlightened rulers is to murder with elegance and some regard for propriety, one must not apply the moral standards of London or Paris to the conduct of their revolted serfs.

The reader will expect some little explanation of the circumstances in which this book was written. It is the fruit of some five journeys to the Near East, including two

visits to Macedonia. The latter of these was particularly instructive. I spent five months of the winter of 1903-4 in the province of Monastir after the Bulgarian rising, acting, with Lady Thompson, Miss Durham and my wife, on behalf of the British Relief Fund. My work brought me into constant touch with people of every race. Going about among the devastated villages, examining their resources, assessing their needs, and listening to their complaints, I had opportunities which rarely come to the European traveller for learning something of the realities of their daily life. One of the many languages of Macedonia was already familiar to me, and previous experiences in Crete had initiated me into some of the mysteries of the Turkish system. We had at every turn to reckon with the prejudices of the administration, and learned much of its workings in our effort to carry on the rather delicate business of relieving its victims. Finally, though our object was purely philanthropic, and though we eschewed politics and sought to help men of all races and creeds alike, we did not escape the suspicions and the enmities which thrive in an atmosphere of falsehood and intrigue. To avoid the politics of the country one had first to study them. I have not in this book attempted to give any account of the relief work, but it is none the less necessary to explain that it provided a large part of the experience on which the book is based.

I should like to express here something of the gratitude which I feel to the courtesy and sympathy of the European residents in Macedonia who allowed me to draw upon their experience and information. I could hardly exaggerate my debt towards His Majesty's consuls, Mr. W. L. Graves, Mr. James McGregor, and Mr. R. Fontana, and with them I would mention the Rev. Lewis Bond, the Rev. E. B. Haskell, and Father Lucien Proy, of the American and French Missions. The kindness of some of the representatives of other European Powers, notably M. Steeg, M. Choublier, Herr Muthsam, and M. Toukholka, was the ~~more~~ welcome as to them I was a stranger. It would, I fear, be indiscreet to mention by name the many natives of

Macedonia, Moslems as well as Christians, from whom I received both hospitality and assistance.

Portions of two chapters have appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Manchester Guardian*, and I am indebted to their editors for permission to make use of them. It is to the *Manchester Guardian's* keen and sympathetic interest in the peoples of the Near East, that I owe most of my opportunities of travel in Turkey.

Some of the photographs in this book have been most generously given to me by Mr. Bertram Christian, Mr. Henry W. Nevinson, and Major Salmon.

To my wife, who shared our travels, performed alone at Ochrida the most arduous and painful of the tasks which fell to us in the work of relief, helped me by her clear and tolerant judgment to form my views of the country, and gave me her aid in writing this book, a public acknowledgment of my whole debt of gratitude would be either irreticent or inadequate.

HAMPSTEAD,  
December, 1905



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

### CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE

	PAGE
The Growth of the Turkish Bureaucracy . . . . .	4
The Doubtful Benefits of European Influence : Superficial Imitation of Civilisation, 9. Ineffectual Interference of the Powers, 15	
The Turkish System of Ascendancy : Limited Idea of the State, 20. Race and Religion, 22. Fanaticism, 25. The Economic Basis, 26	
Types of Turkish Sentiment . . . . .	28
Absence of Civil Order : Illustrations . . . . .	30
Neglect of the Rural Districts . . . . .	32
The Meaning of Fear in Macedonia . . . . .	36
Note. Law Courts and Finance . . . . .	40

## CHAPTER II

### VILLAGE LIFE IN MACEDONIA

Industry and External Conditions of the Villagers . . . . .	42
Tithes and Taxes . . . . .	45
Rural Guards . . . . .	47
Differences in Prosperity of Villages . . . . .	48
Brigandage. Migratory Labour.	
The Land Question . . . . .	51
• Family Budgets. Food and Clothing.	
The Daily Round of Petty Tyranny . . . . .	55



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER III

## THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

	PAGE
Attachment of the Peasants to the Churches . . . . .	59
The Church the one possible Political Organisation . . . . .	61
Power of the Bishops . . . . .	63
Secularisation of Religion . . . . .	66
Absence of Heresy. Indifference to Conduct. Position of Priests. Fatalistic Idea of God.	
Religious Feuds really Racial Conflicts . . . . .	71
Catholicism in the Balkans . . . . .	73
Note. Protestant Missions . . . . .	74

## CHAPTER IV

## THE RACES OF MACEDONIA

Description of a Macedonian Town . . . . .	76
Mixed Racial Origin of Moslems . . . . .	80
Gipsies . . . . .	81
Jews . . . . .	82
The Dounmé . . . . .	84
The Towns not Typical of Macedonia . . . . .	86
Albanian Immigration into Macedonia . . . . .	88
History of Macedonian Races . . . . .	91
Disappearance of Greek and Latin Culture. Causes of Early Decay of Greek influence. The Coming of the Slavs, 94. Origin of the Bulgars, 95. The Bulgarian Empires, 96. Servian Empire, 97.	
Eclipse of the Slav Races after the Turkish Conquest . . . . .	99
Are the Macedonians Serbs or Bulgars? . . . . .	101
National Propagandas :	
Reasons for Servian Failure,* 103. Weakness of Greek Claims, 105.	
Notes. Physical Conformation and Climate . . . . .	108
Means of Communication . . . . .	109

## CHAPTER V

## THE BULGARIAN MOVEMENT

First Impressions of the Bulgarian Character . . . . .	111
The Treaty of San Stefano . . . . .	114
Formation of the Insurgent Committee . . . . .	115
Democratic Attitude. Careful Organisation.	
The Committee in Bulgaria . . . . .	118

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

xvji

	PAGE
Ideal of a neutral Autonomy . . . . .	121
Early Struggles with the Turks . . . . .	124
Terrorism and Feud with the Greeks . . . . .	129
General Tzoncheff's Raid . . . . .	134
The Salonica Outrages . . . . .	135
Hilmi Pasha's Measures of Repression . . . . .	138
Incidents at Mogilla and Smerdesch.	
The General Rising of 1903 in Monastir . . . . .	148
The General Rising of 1903 in Thrace . . . . .	156
The Sufferings of the Non-Combatants . . . . .	158
The Psychology of the Bulgarians . . . . .	166
Note. The Rival Committees . . . . .	171

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VLACHS

Typical Village of Pisodéri . . . . .	173
Place of the Vlachs in the Economy of Macedonia . . . . .	177
The Vlach Language . . . . .	179
History of the Vlachs . . . . .	180
Women the Conservative Force in the East . . . . .	181
Weakening of the Greek Connection . . . . .	185
The Roumanian Propaganda . . . . .	187
Feud with the Greeks . . . . .	189

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GREEKS

Castoria and its Archbishop . . . . .	191
Grounds of Greek Claim to Macedonia . . . . .	194
"Bulgarophone Greeks" . . . . .	199
What is "Hellenism"? . . . . .	201
Vulgar and Literary Greek . . . . .	204
The Greek Alliance with the Turks . . . . .	209
Conduct of the Greek Bands . . . . .	213
Contrast between Cretans and Macedonians . . . . .	218
Note. Greek Statistics . . . . .	219

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE ALBANIANS

	PAGE
The Albanian Character . . . . .	221
Language and History : Scänderbeg, 231. Ali Pasha, 232.	
Customs and Feudalism . . . . .	235
Religion . . . . .	239
Reasons for Conversion to Islam, 240. The Bektashis, 243.	
Koritza and the Language Movement . . . . .	248
Prizrend and the Reforms . . . . .	262
"Old Servia" . . . . .	274
The Future . . . . .	277
Greek and Servian Claims, 278. Austrian and Italian Ambitions, 282. Albanian Pretenders (note), 286.	
Prospects of Autonomy . . . . .	285
Note. Letter from an Albanian Officer . . . . .	288

## CHAPTER IX

## THE PROBLEM OF REFORM

Revival of the Macedonian Question in 1902 . . . . .	290
Policy of Austria . . . . .	293
Policy of Russia . . . . .	296
Hilmi Pasha and the First Reforms . . . . .	300
The Mürzsteg Programme . . . . .	305
The Gendarmerie Scheme, 306. Financial Control, 309.	
Failure to Pacify Macedonia . . . . .	311
Arguments against Partition of Macedonia between Austria and Russia . . . . .	315
Sketch of a Scheme for International Control . . . . .	321
Conclusion . . . . .	332
INDEX . . . . .	337

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Main Street, Ochrida . . . . .	<i>To face p.</i>	31
"A Desert swept by a Hurricane"—The Village of Zagoritchani after the rising in 1903 . . . . .	"	36
A Poor Village of the Plains. (Near Ochrida) . . . . .	"	42
Peasants from a rich Village. (Uskub) . . . . .	"	48
Peasants from a poor Village. (Ochrida) . . . . .	"	48
A prosperous Bulgarian Village among the Hills. (Brusnik, near Monastir) . . . . .	"	50
Peasants Weaving near Ochrida . . . . .	"	53
Ancient Church of St. Sophia (Ochrida), now a Dilapidated Mosque . . . . .	"	60
Bulgarian Monastery near Ochrida . . . . .	"	68
Monastery of Sveti Naoum, Lake Ochrida . . . . .	"	68
Ochrida from the Lake . . . . .	"	76
Mosque at Monastir . . . . .	"	79
The Main Street, Monastir . . . . .	"	79
On the Shore of Lake Ochrida . . . . .	"	99
Mediæval Castle at Ochrida . . . . .	"	99
Tchakalaroff, Commander of the Southern Insurgent Corps. Taken during the Occupation of Klissoura, 1903 . . . . .	"	145
An Insurgent Band in the Rising of 1903 . . . . .	"	148
Tchakalaroff's Staff during the Insurrection. He is seated on the Reader's left . . . . .	"	150
The Ruins of Zagoritchani after the Insurrection . . . . .	"	159
Ruins of Mokreni after the Rising . . . . .	"	163
Turkish Soldiers in a Burned Church . . . . .	"	163
Temporary Hut among the Ruins, Zagoritchani . . . . .	"	164
A Home in Ruins, Djupanishta, 1903 . . . . .	"	164
Temporary Chapel, erected, after the burning of their Village, by the Peasants of Lokov . . . . .	"	171

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A Peasant Cart . . . . .	<i>To face p.</i>	173
A Typical Turkish Bridge . . . . .	"	173
The Greek Archbishop of Castoria gracing a Turkish Review. Next him stands the Turkish Caimakam, and further to the right, the Military Commandant .	"	193
An Albanian Landscape (on the road from Ochrida to Elbasan) . . . . .	"	221
Servian Peasants at Ferizovitch . . . . .	"	262
Moslem Types. Uskub Market-place . . . . .	"	262
A Bulgarian Village near Ochrida a year after the Insurrection, showing how little had been done to repair the devastation. (October, 1904) . . . . .	"	312
A Village Conclave in the Ochrida District . . . . .	"	326

## MAPS

Ethnographical Map of Macedonia . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Turkey in Europe and Neighbouring States . . . . .	<i>To face p.</i> 336

# MACEDONIA

## CHAPTER I

### CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE

THAT nothing changes in the East is a commonplace which threatens to become tyrannical. Assuredly there is something in the spirit of the East which is singularly kindly to survivals and anachronisms. The centuries do not follow one another. They coexist. There is no lopping of withered customs, no burial of dead ideas. Nor is it the Turks alone who betray this genial conservatism. The typical Slav village, isolated without teacher or priest in some narrow and lofty glen, leads its own imperturbable life, guided by the piety of traditions which date from pagan times. It hears strange rumours of a railway which has invaded the legendary plain beyond its mountains. But the world of innovation lies outside its experience. Salonica, with its busy streets, its cosmopolitan crowds, its steamships, and its markets, is still a foreign climate, whose strange air the hillmen fear to breathe. But the Turks, who in Europe at least are seldom a village people, are in externals by no means so conservative as they were. They are a race of townsfolk, whose ideal is beginning to be the garish squalor and the restless pleasures of such places as Constantinople and Salonica. Sit beside a group of young officers, who are chatting over their coffee and cigarettes in a frequented resort, and amid the strange gutturals of their Mongolian speech some borrowed words of French, incessantly repeated, are sure to arrest the ear. It will be *chemin de fer*,

## MACEDONIA

and then perhaps *café chantant*, but the phrase which seems to strike a keynote is *fin de siècle*. Nothing is altered, perhaps, in spirit. Yet on the surface Turkey has changed within the brief space of a century, and nothing in Turkey has changed more profoundly than its government. We are accustomed to view the creation of the younger Balkan States purely from the European standpoint as a revival of nationalism, and as the resultant of a long chain of ideal causes in which the French Revolution played a large part. But the wars and rebellions which founded the modern kingdoms of Greece, Servia, and Roumania owed their success in great part to local conditions. The first decades of the nineteenth century seemed as though they must bring about the collapse of the Turkish Empire, not at all because of European pressure, nor even because of the spread of revolutionary ideas, but simply from an accentuation of centrifugal tendencies which had been evident for many centuries. It so happened that it was in fact two Christian provinces which won their independence, but more than one great Moslem leader came near to achieving the same success. Over Africa the authority of the Grand Turk was already merely nominal, and this was nothing new. Sir Paul Rycaut tells with some humour how, after a treaty regarding the Algerine pirates had been solemnly negotiated between the Government of Charles II. and the Porte, he was sent to obtain its ratification on the spot. Arrived at Algiers he discovered that the Turkish Governor was a nervous prisoner in his palace, while the administration of the pirate-state was conducted by a turbulent assembly of local corsairs, who waived aside the convention with a superb contempt for the Sultan's suzerainty. When the nineteenth century opened, the administration of European Turkey was in the hands of territorial Pashas, who climbed to authority in the district where their estates and their influence were situated, and asked from Constantinople no more than the formal acknowledgment of a power which was theirs in their own right. Ali of Jannina was the most famous product of this system, but he differed from his neighbours and contemporaries rather by his genius

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 3

than by his circumstances. There were other adventurers who also achieved office by local violence and intrigue, and intimidated or bribed the Porte into acknowledging their rights. Sometimes they came of great families who all but inherited their posts. But it was no bar to Ali's advancement that he started life as a brigand and made himself Pasha by forging his commission of investiture. These local magnates exercised all but royal prerogatives, and even made open war and concluded formal peace among themselves. He went further, and became in turn the ally of Napoleon and of Pitt. If his final revolt was crushed after an interminable siege of Jannina, it was not because the Porte had the force to overcome him, but because the local victims of his tyrannies conspired to take an overdue revenge. Not less daring was his contemporary, Passvan Oglou, Pasha of Widin on the Danube. He too was a law to himself, and when the Porte attempted to depose him he quietly gathered a great army and prepared to march upon Constantinople. The menace was enough, and just as the Porte kept its counsel about Ali's forged commission, so it made its peace with Passvan and his legions. More than a decade later the Pasha of Scutari openly rebelled, and only a colossal act of treachery, in which the chiefs of his conspiracy were massacred at a banquet, availed to check the movement. Egypt at this period became for a time an independent and even hostile state. Turkey, in short, was less an empire than a military confederacy, held together rather by the bond of a common religion than by loyalty to the Sultan or by the rigour of a despotic administration. The loose and incoherent structure seemed on the point of dissolution. The fleet was lost at Navarino; the flower of the army was destroyed in the massacre of the Janissaries, a species of Pretorian Guard, whom the Sultan slaughtered and disbanded because he dreaded their power and doubted their loyalty; the Civil Service was deprived of its most capable element, the Phanariot<sup>1</sup> aristocracy,

<sup>1</sup> The Phanar is the quarter of Constantinople in which the Greek Patriarch resides. It became the centre of a Greek aristocracy half hierarchical and half mercantile, which lent its services to the Turks.



by the Greek revolution, which cast a slur of suspicion and disgrace upon even the most abject and self-seeking Greeks in Turkish pay.

From this universal catastrophe the Turkish Empire emerged strengthened and transformed, and more completely Ottoman than before. The reorganisation was largely the work of a Vizier of great ability, Reschid Pasha, whose work deserves to be compared with Richelieu's. The Porte became a real power throughout the Empire. The territorial Pashas were one by one replaced by the nominees of Constantinople, who had no local roots in the countries which they governed, and were in consequence the obedient servants of the central power. Reschid was not nice in his methods. His Liberalism was a very superficial thing, and he shrank neither from treachery nor violence to carry out his end. The Turkish yoke lay no lighter on the subject peoples of the Empire for all the order which he infused into the administration. On the contrary, he gave to the system of Ottoman ascendancy a new lease of life, and added many a decade of misery and stagnation to the servile destinies of the Christian peoples. But an advance towards competence and stability his work undoubtedly was. His successors, notably Ali and Fuad Pashas, continued the new departure, and under such weak sovereigns as Abdul Medjid and Abdul Aziz there grew up a relatively strong and capable bureaucracy, controlled by ministers who enjoyed a certain authority and independence. If Turkey learned little from Europe, one invention at least she thoroughly adopted. The telegraph has done more even than gunpowder to perpetuate despotism. When the nineteenth century opened, nothing was easier for an ambitious Pasha who reigned at Jannina or Scutari or Widin than to isolate himself and defy Constantinople. The Porte knew little of the local circumstances. The news of a murder, a rising, a usurpation, could not arrive before the rebel had had time to entrench himself and destroy his enemies. And if news travelled slowly, commands went no faster. The greater Pashas maintained their agents in Constantinople, whose duty it was to bribe and intrigue in

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE ,

their interests, and these men were kept better informed than the Porte itself. The telegraph changed all this, since it gave the Porte, under a rigid system of censorship, not merely rapid news, but a monopoly of news. The telegraph substituted for the nearly independent Pashas of the older days a race of little officials, destitute of authority and without local influence, whose function it became to sit at one end of the telegraph wire, to transmit incessant reports and receive minute instructions. A new type of functionary has replaced the old territorial governor. They come less from the landed and wealthy classes of the country than from the city-bred population of needy clerks which has grown up in Constantinople. The first step is to obtain a sinecure in one of the Ministries, and promotion from this to an administrative post is a question of waiting and *backsheesh*. Ability to write is the only necessary qualification to a man who can buy a post, and indeed little else is needed, since the telegraph leaves to even the greater officials so little discretion and initiative. These men are perpetually shifted from one post to another, and since they have neither fixity of tenure nor local influence nor even local possessions, they become typical placemen, indifferent to the fortunes of the territory they rule, and anxious only during their brief period of uncertain power to recoup themselves by bribes and presents for the price which they paid for their posts. Only the more important officials who have their hands in the public purse can expect to receive a salary, and as resignations are rarely accepted,<sup>1</sup> corruption is universal and inevitable. They are aliens and foreigners in the land they govern, more completely isolated from their subjects than even the English in India. An Anglo-Indian at least speaks the language of his district, has as a rule some curiosity about its customs and habits of thought, and feels no active hostility towards its religion. The Turkish official in Mace-

<sup>1</sup> Even military officers are rarely if ever allowed to resign their commissions. They are expected to be soldiers and nothing more, and if they happen to belong to one of the suspected races, notably if they are Albanians, they may beg in vain from year's end to year's end for permission to visit their estates or their native place. They are virtually exiles within the Empire.

donia, unless he happens to be an Albanian, can rarely speak a single language of the country, knows nothing of the life of the peasants, and regards the political and religious movements of the Christians with a dull and uncomprehending irritation. The Asiatic Turk who comes unprepared into the Macedonian chaos rarely grasps even the elements of the question, and he remains to the end far more a foreigner in the land he governs than many a European who has mixed with the people of the country. Even if the Turk is able to converse with the Christian in a language which both understand, frank intercourse is impossible. The Turk desires only to be flattered, and the Christian is usually too wise or too timid to speak the truth. Such conversations are an elaborate game in which one party at least deploys a practised art in concealing his real thought, and the other is often quite without suspicion of the deceit which is practised upon him. To speak the truth to a Turk under any circumstances whatever, even when there is no apparent gain in lying and no evident risk in sincerity, would argue in a native Christian a degree of unconventionality amounting almost to original genius. There are conceptions in the mind of the native Christian which no interpreter's skill will ever translate into Turkish.

The system of centralisation as it exists in Macedonia has been cunningly devised in order to prevent the growth of any local opinion and to check the development of racial self-consciousness. The term Macedonia is itself seditious, and there is no administrative area which corresponds either to the modern Macedonia of the Bulgarian insurgents or to the ancient Macedonia of the Greeks. Macedonia lies confounded within three vilayets<sup>1</sup> (*i.e.*, provinces), which corre-

<sup>1</sup> The term "vilayet" may be translated province. Its Governor is termed a Vali, and has the rank of a Pasha (equal to a military General). There are six vilayets in European Turkey—two to the west are Albanian, Jannina (Epirus) and Scutari. Three in the centre are partially Macedonian—Salonica, Monastir, and Uskub. To the east lies Adrianople. Constantinople forms a division apart. A large vilayet is subdivided into two or three sandjaks, the Governor of which is termed a Mutessarif, who also ranks as a Pasha. Next comes the Caza (department), governed by a Caimakam (prefect), who ranks as a Bey, and is equal to a military colonel. The smallest division is the Nahie (district), governed by a Mudir (sub-prefect).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 7

spond to no natural division either racial or geographical. The Bulgarians are strong in all three of the Macedonian vilayets, but in each of them a makeweight is skilfully provided. The Serbs and Albanians are numerous in the north-east (Uskub). The Greeks are well represented in the vilayet of Salonica. Greeks and Albanians balance Bulgarians in the vilayet of Monastir. The result is that no race attains a predominance, and no province acquires a national character. The natural arrangement would have been to place Greeks, Servians, and Albanians in compartments of their own, leaving the Bulgarians to occupy the centre and the east; but that would have been a violation of one of the guiding principles of Turkish statecraft, *Divide et Impera*. The same plan is even more effectually carried out in the Armenian districts of Asiatic Turkey. It has its counterpart in the system by which any display of vigour on the part of one or other of these races becomes at once the signal for the bestowal of favours upon its rivals. When Greece made war upon Turkey in 1897, the Bulgarians were suddenly permitted to create a number of new bishoprics. When the Bulgarians rose in 1903 the Serbs, the Vlachs, and to a certain extent the Greeks, were overwhelmed with official favours.

The bureaucracy was at the height of its power a generation ago, when the Liberal Midhat Pasha played the king-maker, overthrew two Sultans, and imposed a Constitution on the young Abdul Hamid. Midhat's democratic Constitution may or may not have been a sincerely conceived reform, but in this at least he was in earnest—he stood for a responsible ministry; he intended to curb the caprice of the Sultans; and though Turkey might still have remained a despotism under his rule, it would not have been an autocracy subject to the personal will of an irremovable tyrant. Midhat was bundled into exile and done to death in an Arabian prison. The work of the Reschids and the Fuads was further sublimated into the Hamidian system of to-day. The administration already centralised in Constantinople has been further concentrated in the Palace. The Porte is a powerless survival, and the ministers

nonentities whose business is carried on over their heads by the Sultan and his favourites. The telegraph wires which used to end at the Porte now lead to Yildiz Kiosk, and the rulers of Turkey are no longer such comparatively sane and competent men as the Grand Viziers of the middle decades of the century, but the fanatics, the courtiers, and the spies who have won the confidence of the despot. Turkey has a working Sultan, and his very virtues of industry and minute application, joined as they are to an intelligence utterly uneducated and a temperament which is at the mercy of its fears, have become the bane and the ruin of the elaborate system which rests upon them. The administration is honey-combed with spies who enjoy the ear of Yildiz Palace, and the terror of the reports which these pests have it in their power to make, paralyses still further the energy and the initiative of the provincial officials. On the pretensions and the authority of the Palace, common sense imposes no limits. The very movements of the Turkish armies during the Russo-Turkish War were directed not by the generals on the spot, but by the Imperial amateur and his court at Constantinople. There is always in every Vali's jurisdiction and in every General's staff some subordinate who enjoys the confidence of a Palace favourite, and whose rôle is in effect to spy upon his superior. It soon comes to be known in official circles who this dangerous person is, and he rapidly acquires an authority larger than that of his responsible chief. I have heard it said that there was a junior officer on the staff of Edhem Pasha, the Commander-in-Chief of the army which invaded Thessaly in 1897, whose telegrams to the Palace actually took precedence along the wires over those of the Field-Marshal himself. Sometimes the Palace takes advantage of the jealousies which almost always exist between the civil and military authorities. The colonel in command of the garrison will telegraph direct to the Palace a report upon the equivocal conduct of the civil Caimakam (prefect), accuse him, it may be, of intriguing with the local bishop, denounce him as a patriotic Albanian, or suggest that he is inefficient and remiss. It is only where politics

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 9

are concerned, however, that this active espionage has become a system. For, indeed, neither the Palace nor the bureaucracy is interested in anything else. In all that touches the economic affairs of his district, the administration of justice, or the ordinary affairs of police, the provincial official may muddle and mar as he pleases. The welfare of his people is not the absorbing preoccupation of Abdul Hamid. The character of a Turkish functionary is in consequence a matter of rather secondary importance. A good prefect or governor may make his presence felt chiefly by abstaining from active or wanton oppression. He may redress a few individual cases of injustice. He may check the influence of the few local fanatics whose trade is violence and whose dream is massacre. But if a general persecution of one Christian race or another has been decreed, he must obey his instructions like every one else who is bound to the bureaucratic wheel. To do positive good is quite beyond his competence or his means. He has no surplus to spend and no discretion in disposing of such funds as exist. He could not, if he would, restore the roads, alter the methods of fiscal spoliation, or civilise the police and the courts. In every emergency he must follow detailed orders, and in the most urgent crisis his answer to a dilemma can only be delay. He must wait until the telegraph has spoken.<sup>1</sup> One smiles a little when the appointment of honest officials is suggested as a remedy for Turkish misrule. The cutting of the telegraph wires from Constantinople is the only radical cure.

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While the fabric of the Turkish State has been profoundly modified from within during the past century, the pressure

<sup>1</sup> I first realised what a power the telegraph is in Turkey after the Candia massacre of 1898, when the Christian quarter of a flourishing town was destroyed by the mob with the complicity of the troops, and a number of the English garrison were shot. I heard afterwards from the Director of the telegraph office in Canea (a Scot), that for three hours, while the fighting and the massacre were in progress, Ismail Bey, the acting-governor of Crete, occupied the telegraph office in Canea and maintained constant touch with Etem Pasha of Candia, and so controlled every detail of the incident.

of Europe has also made itself increasingly felt. The results have not been happy. Some scanty knowledge of French is now expected from the educated Turk. It is for conversational purposes rather than for study. The censorship admits few books save the baser type of novel, and only the most superficial conceptions of Western culture filter in through the strange vocabulary of unassimilated ideas. But in a vague way the bureaucracy has learned that certain institutions utterly foreign to its own civilisation exist among the greater Powers, and for ends of its own it has attempted to imitate them. There is a modernised system of law which attempts to compromise between the *Code Napoléon* and the Koran. The Ministries in Constantinople repeat at least the names familiar in the West. There is even a Ministry of Mines and Forests, which has its officials in the interior. Only the mines and forests are lacking. Minerals there are in plenty in Macedonia and Albania, but in the absence of roads, security, and justice, they cannot be worked at a profit. The forests are what the goats and the charcoal-burners have made them, and if the Turks have had a policy, it was to destroy them as dangerous cover for brigands and insurgents. But the inspectors of this singular Ministry abound. It is as good a pretext as another for multiplying offices for the benefit of the ruling caste. This imitation of the West even extends to the adoption of purely humanitarian institutions. Every town in Turkey has its municipal doctor, who is supposed to watch over the public health and visit the poor without payment. But he is usually a graduate of Constantinople, and his salary is always in arrears. There are also military doctors attached to every battalion. There was one of these at Ochrida, but since surgery was the one branch of his profession which he did not profess, wounded soldiers were attended by a local bone-setter, who kept an oil and candle shop. This comical anxiety to ape Europe has no other result than to confuse the minds of the official class, to burden the treasury, and to distract the Government from humbler work less hopelessly beyond its competence, and an inconceivable element of sham and unreality is thus

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 11

added to the normal atmosphere of Oriental corruption and intrigue. It may be instructive to give an illustration.

Early in December of 1903 I went to Castoria to ascertain what kind and measure of relief would be necessary in the burned and devastated villages of the populous Bulgarian region round this Græco-Turkish centre. Turks and Greeks were alike complacent. Shut up in the quaint city, isolated amidst its lake, they knew little and cared less about the misery beyond them. Riding out to visit the villages, I came first to Aposkepo, barely three miles from town. Every house but five or six had been burned, and the villagers had an unmistakable air which told of want, disease, and ebbing vitality. I asked for the priest, the teacher, and the head-man, only to be told that all of them had died within the past two weeks. Further inquiry, family by family, showed that since the return from the hills after the insurrection, practically every household had lost an inmate from disease, and in almost every one of the wretched shelters which the peasants had built among the charred ruins of their homes one person at least lay ill. The prevalent disease was a sort of maglignant influenza which resembled typhoid in its symptoms. Had the municipal doctor been to see them? Yes, he passed once along the high-road, and they induced him to come in. He did nothing, and had never come back. I then rode on to a group of four villages further within the mountains (Posdivichta, Tcheresnichta, and the two Drenovenis). Before the first of them was in sight a peasant from the fields, seeing a European on horseback, came running to meet me, and inquired if I were by chance a doctor. His child was stricken with smallpox. In the village there was no other subject of discussion. Here, too, nearly every household had its patient, and the children, with the skin peeling from their faces, were running about in the lanes. The old priest fumbled over the pages of his funeral register, but the task of counting the dead was a work which demanded time. In the other villages the same conditions prevailed. There was no doctor, no isolation, no suitable food, and the sick lay groaning beneath filthy blankets, on



the wet earthen floor under a dripping roof of improvised thatch suspended over crumbling and blackened walls. The prospect was appalling, and an epidemic throughout the whole hungry province seemed almost inevitable. When I got back to Castoria I visited the prefect (Caimakam) and the municipal doctor. Both professed to be totally ignorant of an epidemic which had been raging at their doors for three weeks. I obtained the prefect's permission to engage a doctor on behalf of the Relief Fund and to start a hospital. A building was easily found, and a telegram to Mr. Graves, our Consul-General in Salonica, brought a prompt promise of aid from the nursing Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul.

But there was still the spreading epidemic to be thought of, and in an evil moment I telegraphed to Hilmi Pasha in Monastir, suggesting the placing of a cordon round the infected villages. It was a disastrous inspiration; for it implied a tacit criticism of the Imperial Government. The reply was decisive and characteristic. The Government, in its ceaseless care for its subjects, would do all that was necessary, it would even establish a hospital of its own, and our hospital would not be required. In all the centuries that the Turks have held Castoria they had never yet dreamed of founding a hospital. The motive was obviously to forestall us. Hospitals in Turkey are supposed to be a peculiarly dangerous form of political propaganda, and to found one it is necessary to purchase an Imperial Firman from Constantinople, a process which implies a banker, an ambassador, and a skilful go-between. I hurried to Monastir and saw the Pasha in person. When I represented that the hospital was already an accomplished fact, that we had rented a building and engaged a doctor, and that this terrible institution would only be temporary, he gave a reluctant consent on condition that we eschewed the dangerous word "hospital" and bound ourselves solemnly to say "infirmary" instead. But as to work in the villages he was firm. There the Government would do everything, and a high Turkish medical officer with the rank of a colonel, one Fuad Bey, was despatched in hot haste to Castoria. A fortnight later

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 13

I returned. Our "infirmary" was in working order under the Sisters from Salonica. An ambulance which we had started at Aposkepo had been handed over to the Turkish sanitary authorities. Fuad Bey had come and gone, but the Mutessarif (Governor) of Koritza, a Pasha in rank, was on the spot to watch developments. This exalted personage called upon us with the municipal doctor in his suite and an edifying conversation followed. A stringent military cordon, he assured me, had been placed round the infected villages, so that no one could come out or go in. They were completely isolated. The epidemic, so Fuad Bey declared, had nearly spent itself, and the doctor had been able to find only six patients for his hospital at Aposkepo. "How were they doing?" "Thank God, very well indeed, except one dear little boy who would probably die." (There were tears in the doctor's voice.) One of the Sisters was anxious to spend her afternoons at this hospital; would the Pasha permit it? The Pasha smiled and nodded, but the doctor sternly objected that she would carry infection through his precious cordon.

"But," said I, "surely that applies also to your own visits?"

"I never go."

"And who looks after the patients?"

"A male infirmiry nurse."

"Is he from Monastir?"

"No, a peasant of the village."

Next day, with some fear in my mind of that impassable cordon, I went to Aposkepo to supervise the giving of relief in kind. I had no thought of visiting the hospital. The cordon was oddly invisible, and as I passed the door of the hospital peasant women and children were going in and out. I asked them if they were the attendants of the hospital. They stared blankly. They had never heard of a hospital. I went in and found the place tenanted by the usual refugee families. One room, however, was empty, and on the floor lay six diminutive mattresses. That was the hospital. The patients were a myth, the cordon was a myth, the nurse was a myth, and the little

dying boy was the embroidery of a myth. That same afternoon a deputation arrived from the four smallpox-stricken villages to fetch the blankets which we had promised them. We inquired how they had contrived to evade the military cordon. It was the first they had heard of its existence.

Some days later I was again in Monastir. This time I had decided to keep silence. But Hilmi Pasha, seizing a moment when his audience-chamber was well filled with a miscellaneous assortment of visitors, including two other Europeans, expanded upon all he had done to cope with the epidemic, and appealed to me for confirmation. He listened grimly, thanked me with an effort, and promised to send back Fuad Bey and to dismiss the municipal doctor. From that moment our hospital, and indeed our whole work in Castoria, became the object of a systematic persecution, fostered, it should be explained, by the Greek Archbishop. More than once the decree went forth that our hospital was to be closed, and once a policeman actually called to expel the patients. Fuad Bey was now a fixture in Castoria, and with the aid of a competent Greek physician he did at last establish a Turkish hospital on a small scale. The only trouble was that none of the peasants would go near it, and they always replied, in answer to our recommendations, that the place was merely a prison. In point of fact it had from first to last some five or six patients, who were seized by force at the gates of the town as they were coming in to our hospital. Patients coming in and out to us were on several occasions searched and cruelly beaten by the soldiers and the police. Our doctor was at first forbidden to make his rounds in the villages, and then grudgingly permitted, after a consular protest, to make them accompanied by Fuad Bey. This gentleman was nothing loth, for he received an extravagant travelling allowance for every mile he covered. His function was, of course, the primary duty of every Turkish official—to spy. But he was as unfit for this work as for doctoring, since he knew neither of the languages of the country—Bulgarian and Greek. His linguistic equipment beyond

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 15

Turkish was perhaps some hundred words of French, and, since Turkish is not a language affected by writers of medical books, the sources of his science and the motives of his promotion were something of a mystery. The municipal doctor, whose salary was seventeen months in arrear, was not dismissed—that would have been too much good fortune. Lady Thompson, who had meantime arrived from England to take charge of the relief work in the Castoria District, was surrounded with spies in uniform, who took their seat in the passages of her house, and insisted on accompanying her even when she went for health's sake for a sail on the lake. Our sealed letters were opened in the post, and one of them was seen by a Greek friend of mine in the possession of the Greek Archbishop. From first to last the episode was an elaborate object-lesson in Turkish conceptions of government. Their absolute neglect of public hygiene is the normal condition. Confronted suddenly with European standards, the incompetent administrative machinery for aping civilisation is set in motion. It results in sham and unreality, of which Hilmi Pasha, arch-bureaucrat that he is, is himself a victim. But so slack is discipline, even in reformed Macedonia, that none of the guilty officials are punished or removed; they contrive, on the contrary, to make money by espionage. The spies are as useless as the imitators of civilisation, and for all their activity their superiors know nothing of the real state of the interior. National jealousies make themselves felt, and the Turks lend themselves readily to a scandalous Greek intrigue. A pitiable humanitarian farce ends in an outburst of sheer brutality. The suspicion of some political motive sits rooted in every mind, and Greeks, Turks, and Europeans move through a fog of deception in an atmosphere poisoned by race-hatred and "propaganda."

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So far as it has succeeded since the Crimean War in imposing upon the Turks an illusory pretence of civilisation, European influence has made for weakness and disruption. It has had another and more important action by creating for the subjects of civilised Powers a State within

a State. The origin of this humiliating system goes back to Byzantine times, when colonies of Genoese and Venetian merchants were allowed to settle in quarters of their own within Constantinople, and to enjoy the privileges of self-government. These privileges, much valued by the "Frank" traders, rested upon treaties which came to be known as the "Capitulations." They were continued by the Turks, who had no wish to compete with Italian trade, at a time when they neither feared nor respected the West, and probably welcomed an opportunity of encouraging the "Latins" at the expense of the Greeks. As the Dutch and the English built up a trade to Turkey, these immunities were gradually extended to all Christians who were not Ottoman subjects. They were not very scrupulously observed, and the consular records of the seventeenth century show that the English Levant Company adopted a very humble attitude towards the Grand Signior, defended its rights rather by bribery than by arms, and never dreamed of resorting to naval action, as the Great Powers do to-day, even when its agents were publicly insulted and deforced. The modern attitude towards Turkey rests upon Turkish weakness and Turkish defeats, and that fact is sufficiently understood by Moslem opinion. Protected by his flag, subject only to the jurisdiction of his consul, the European in Turkey is completely independent of Turkish authority. He is absolutely immune from direct taxation, and though he alone enjoys security for life and property, he alone pays nothing for the privilege. His Government will assist him to obtain "concessions." He has in the consular courts not merely a fair but, I am afraid, sometimes a partial tribunal. The consequences of a diplomatic dispute, with ironclads in the background, are so onerous that the Turks will frequently submit to sharp practice where a European is concerned. He can make money where a native, whether Moslem or Christian, would succumb to the burden of taxation and the rascality of the Turkish courts. He uses his privileges to the full, and not infrequently abuses them. International finance, moreover, since the Russo-Turkish War, has turned the humiliation

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 17

of Turkey and the powerfulness of diplomacy into occasions for wringing a steady and considerable revenue from a bankrupt anarchy. The railways, the tobacco monopoly, and the public debt are the largest developments of this practice. The same system prevails in China, and there, as Sir Robert Hart has shown, it provoked the Boxer rising. Before civilisation destroys a decaying Empire, it first exploits it. One could hardly exaggerate the sense of degradation and injustice which the self-seeking of Europe creates in the Turkish mind. This irritation cannot often be satisfied upon the sacred persons of Europeans, but, as in China, the native Christian, taken in quantities, provides an acceptable substitute. Of the futilities and hypocrisies of the humanitarian side of European action in Turkey it is hardly necessary to speak. The failure of diplomacy in this direction is now a commonplace. We have seen the French fleet sail to Mitylene to collect the debts of a pair of usurers, but no ironclad moved through the two years of the Armenian agony.<sup>1</sup> And the Turks also have seen it. They are hardly to be blamed if they refuse to believe that Europe is disinterested when she protests against massacre and devastation. To us this reasoning seems to lack subtlety. It is precisely because we are disinterested that we are content with inaction. But the Turks laugh at our professions of humanity, and argue that if we care at all about the fate of their Christian subjects it is because we regard them as our instruments and the servants of our policy. Behind the Armenians they see England, and behind the Slavs, Russia. It is not so much from fanaticism that they indulge in excesses. It is rather because they wish to wreak upon defenceless allies and abandoned *protégés* of Europe the fear and the indignation with which the Great Powers inspire them. It is sometimes said that it is the sympathy and the encouragement which the humane parties in England and France have shown towards disloyal

<sup>1</sup> Compare, too, our own action in Crete. We did nothing effective after the repeated massacres of native Christians. When our own troops were shot down and our consul murdered we expelled the Turks.

Christian races in Turkey which provoke massacre. The ineffectual but ostentatious protection accorded by the various consulates is a much more potent cause. The Turk is unimaginative and ill-informed. His newspapers, rigidly censored, do not tell him when a mass meeting of pro-Greeks or pro-Armenians has been held in St. James's Hall. But he does see with his own eyes the courtyards of the consulates thronged with petitioners and complainants, his own liege subjects, who stand there under a European flag, upon inviolable soil, to pour out their grievances and their accusations against him into sympathetic alien ears. I have sometimes tried to imagine, in face of such a spectacle as that, how an average Englishman or a nationalist Frenchman would feel if such things were done in London or in Paris. The fires of Smithfield would be smouldering still if we had had to endure such treatment in our persecuting days, and Saint Bartholomew's would be a modern institution.

It seems to me not an extravagant conclusion that the weak but irritating intervention of Europe has caused more suffering to the native Christians than it has prevented. This system is not occasional, nor is it reserved for large and grave crises. It is followed daily in the interior ; and in such places as Monastir and Uskub, where few of the Powers have any subjects of their own, the consulates are maintained solely for the purpose of hearing grievances which they are impotent to redress. In some directions they succeed. It is notorious, for example, that most if not all of the Bulgarian bishops and their lay secretaries are involved more or less directly, and more or less voluntarily, in the rebellious activities of the Macedonian Committee. The Turks know this very well, but they never dare do more than place a Bishop under a sort of courteous and temporary arrest within his own palace. In one Macedonian town I was on good terms with the Bishop, his secretary, and the Turkish prefect. The prefect one day explained to me in great detail the exact shades of revolutionary opinion which the Bishop and his secretary affected. The cleric was a Russophil and a Pan Slavist. The layman

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 19

was an ardent Macedonian nationalist, rather distrustful of Bulgaria, and profoundly hostile to Russia. The description was good and accurate. But knowing this, and knowing the overt practices to which these opinions led, the prefect has still to receive the Bishop at his council board, and to treat him with an elaborate and ceremonial courtesy. Why? Because the Powers, and more particularly Russia, maintain him in his place, and would treat any attempt on the part of the Turkish authorities to punish or even to remove him as an occasion for serious diplomatic action. This is not a humanitarian intervention. There would have been no inhumanity in removing the Bishop. On the other hand, when the same prefect filled his noisome prison with peasant women arrested on trumped-up charges as dangerous revolutionaries, no Embassy stirred a finger to release them. This intervention is political. In effect and perhaps in intention its sole result is to weaken the Turks, to sap their self-respect, and to hasten the day when the rotting fruit will drop into the mouths of the interested Powers. I was present one day in Hilmi Pasha's audience room at Uskub, when the acting Russian consul, a member of the Embassy staff, called on political business. It was in May of 1903, three months before the general Macedonian rising. The machinery of "reform" was in full swing. The Pasha sat among a litter of papers. His orderlies went to and fro in stockinged feet with cat-like tread carrying warrants and despatches. One heard the click of the telegraph, and felt that the bureaucratic machine was moving. The great man scribbled orders on the palm of his hand while he talked, and interrupted his conversation every few minutes to hurl some telegraphic thunderbolt. At last the Russian had his cue. He had come to protest against the wholesale arrests of suspected revolutionaries which the Pasha was carrying out all over Macedonia. It was indeed a veritable reign of terror, but indiscriminate though the arrests were, I doubt whether even a very malevolent Turk could make many mistakes. The Bulgarian movement is a national conspiracy, and it would be hard to find in all Macedonia a hundred professed Bulgarians who have not



contributed willingly or otherwise to its fortunes. But the Russian would admit no such arguments. To arrest a man upon mere suspicion was illiberal. To retain him in prison without a trial was unconstitutional. To propose to banish the heads of the movement by administrative decree, as Hilmi Pasha did, was an offence against the rights of man. The Russian was a jurist of some note. His pleading was eloquent and moving, and one only wished that it could have been addressed to the ears of the late M. Plehve. Hilmi Pasha was too polite or too ignorant to administer the obvious *tu quoque*. The argument was after all only a diplomatic circumlocution for something much more cogent—something about the arrears of the Russo-Turkish indemnity, or the movements of the Black Sea Fleet. The result was that the suspected leaders were not banished, but released. They went back to their villages. They worked very quietly for three months, and on the appointed day Macedonia rose in arms. This Russian action<sup>1</sup> would have been defensible if it had been consistent. To make a revolution possible by such methods would be a relatively moral policy, if one meant that it should achieve its goal of liberation. But that Russia did not intend. She used the revolution, and—at least indirectly—promoted the revolution, only in order to weaken Turkey. And that indeed has been the total effect of European intervention since the Treaty of Berlin. The Christians are not better situated but rather worse, because their oppressor is weak—and for ever reminded of his weakness, angry, suspicious, and afraid—and for ever confirmed in his suspicions. Knowing that the Turk cannot govern, Europe permits him to govern, and renders his task impossible.

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It would be a mistake to dwell too long upon the changes which a century has wrought in the fabric and conditions of the Turkish State, considerable as those changes are. The idea of the Turkish State remains what it has ever been, and the spirit of its administration has been modified

<sup>1</sup> Russia took the lead, but she had the support of most if not all of the other Powers.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 21

neither by its own statesmen and sovereigns, nor yet by the influence and the pressure of Europe. The Turks have never lost their tradition of conquest. They are still at heart a predatory and nomadic tribe, and they have instituted a settled government only so far as that is necessary to perpetuate and secure their domination. They regard their land less as a home than as a fief from which they expect to draw a tribute. Its inhabitants are not citizens but subjects. No sense of a commonwealth has grown up in their minds to bridge this isolation, or to cement warring races in a care for their common country. And indeed the Turkish idea of the State is so empty, so negative, and so amazingly primitive that there was no room for the growth of such common interests. In the original fabric of the Turkish State as it existed before the superficial and insincere aping of Western peoples during the last generation, there was no place even for civil law, not to speak of such comparatively modern functions of the State as the care of education. Turkey was a theocratic Power with a military basis. Each Church had its own canon law by which it settled disputes within the ranks of its own members. As for the police, each village hired its own watchmen; while education was and still is the concern of the Churches. The military proper and the gendarmerie were concerned not so much with the preservation of order as with the maintenance of the system of ascendancy. If a race revolted, if a village was contumacious, if a brigand threatened to turn into a patriot, then they had a duty. But with ordinary non-political crime and violence they concerned themselves as little as with purely civil disputes. The State might interest itself in roads and railways just in so far as these possess a strategic importance. These were the limits of the old Turkish State, and in effect, despite paper innovations, they are its limits still. The taxes are a tribute, the police are a garrison, the administration exists only to maintain the authority of the ruling caste. There are no terms in our language in which this system can be adequately described; for the feeble analogies within our experience convey no idea of

anything so monstrous. The "ascendancy" built up before Catholic Emancipation by the English "garrison" in Ireland did not approach it; for the English minority, however intolerant and exclusive they may have been at their worst, brought with them traditions of order and civil government. While they refused all political and some civil rights to the conquered majority, they did none the less maintain the State as an organisation for the protection of the individual citizen irrespective of race or religion. With the Turks it is simply a device to perpetuate their conquest.

This ascendancy rests, however, not upon race but on religion. Few of the members of the ruling caste are really the descendants of the conquering Osmanli Turks. They are mainly converted Slavs or Albanians, who have accepted the traditions of the conquest, lent their arms to the conquerors, and appropriated the rewards and privileges of a distant triumph. The spirit of this ascendancy shows itself most clearly in the unwritten law that no Christian may exercise direct executive command over Moslems, whether in a civil or in a military capacity. There are native Christian privates in the "reformed" Macedonian gendarmerie, but there are no native Christian officers. There are Christian Ambassadors in the Diplomatic service, who enjoy the rank of Pasha, and an Armenian is actually at the head of the Civil List department. But there are no Christian Valis or Caimakams (Governors and prefects). In one of the recent "reforms" initiated after the Armenian massacres the Sultan created a set of native Christian assistants or assessors who are supposed to rank second to the Valis, and to advise and control them. They are what the Turks call "Evvet-Effendim"—"Yes-Sirs"—whose place in life is to assent to whatever their masters may think good. I knew the astute old Levantine Catholic who filled this post in Uskub. He passed his life pleasantly enough between his home and the hotel which served as a club. I never saw him in the *Konak* (Government buildings); and when the Vali was absent it was not he, but a very junior Turk,

who acted as deputy-Governor. The corresponding functionary at Monastir, after some months of punctual attendance at his office, finally took to hanging up his seal in an accessible place on a nail above his office desk, while he spent his days at home—a convenient arrangement which allowed him to say “yes” by proxy as often as might be necessary, without the trouble of sitting idle in his chair. Nor is it otherwise with the Europeans in the Turkish service. Von der Goltz Pasha, the capable German who organised the modern Turkish army, never enjoyed so much as a fiction of executive command. When he quitted his post, overwhelmed with the gratitude of the Sultan, he remarked to a friend of mine, “Through all these years I never enjoyed as much power as the commonest sergeant may exercise, nor possessed so much as the right to put an insubordinate private under an hour’s arrest. And yet I was a Marshal of the Empire.” Against this stubborn tradition all the efforts of reforming Europe have broken in vain; and when, under the present Austro-Russian reform scheme, it was proposed to place European officers in executive control of the Macedonian gendarmerie, the idea broke down because, as our own Ambassador frankly confessed, it was impossible to put Christians in command of a force in which three-fourths of the men were Moslems. The feeling beneath this absolute rule of ascendancy is difficult to define. It is not the sense of racial superiority which we ourselves feel in India. Certainly we should never place a native Mohamedan officer over white troops. But the Turks will give a military commission to a negro without the slightest sense that white Mohamedans are thereby degraded. Their commissioned ranks are crowded with Greeks, Slavs, and Albanians, aliens by blood and language, but professing Moslems. Nor can it be exactly a religious sentiment. If anything in the Koran really forbade Moslems to obey Christians, we should not find them such trustworthy and devoted soldiers as they are in India and the Soudan. It is the tradition of conquest; the conqueror is superior to the conquered, and it is an historical accident that the line

between them is drawn by religion. The Turk feels, I think, not that the Christian is necessarily inferior, but rather that he is probably disloyal. It is a political distinction disguised as a religious difference. It was the same sentiment which in our own country dictated Test Acts and delayed Catholic Emancipation. Our own ruling classes felt that Nonconformists were potential and partial rebels, and quite logically they excluded them from power. The Turk, whose whole conception of the State is theocratic, acts more strictly and steadily upon the same principle. And indeed the Christians of Turkey really are what the Catholics in England were supposed to be. They are ultramontanes. Their ideals lie beyond the Danube and the Adriatic. They cannot be in sentiment subjects of an Asiatic despotism. They draw their culture from abroad, and fix their hopes outside the Empire. The Slav peasant in Macedonia will often feel and express the same devotion towards the Tsar as the most old-fashioned Russian villager. The Macedonian Greek is at heart a subject of King George, and a citizen of the Hellenic kingdom. He feels indeed as intensely on this subject as the Cretans do. I happened to be in a remote Cretan village when the news arrived that the Powers had conceded the autonomy of the island. I was sitting with some peasants and a country doctor, the oracle of the district, in a wayside café, while he expounded the glorious news. The peasants could not be induced to share his enthusiasm.

"What is this thing, autonomy?" asked an old man.

"Well," said the doctor cheerily, "it means that instead of sending our taxes to Athens we shall spend them ourselves."

The peasant reflected for a while, silent and moody. Suddenly his face lit up with a smile and a quaint sparkle of cunning.

"Be sure," he exclaimed, "we'll find some way of sending them to Athens secretly!"

That feeling might easily be paralleled in Macedonia, though the Bulgarians have more wish for local independence than the Cretans had. But irrespective of race the

eyes of all Macedonians are fixed upon Europe. Every family has its own gods. On the walls of one house you will find a portrait of the Russian Tsar. Another displays the English royal family. A third honours the King of Greece or the King of Servia. A fourth puts its trust in the sovereigns of all the Great Powers, and one judges of its wealth by noting whether it has replaced President Faure and Queen Victoria by their successors. These gaudy lithographs represent nearly all that the Macedonian middle class knows of art. The moral can hardly be lost upon the Turks. They themselves are Asiatics. Their Christian subjects are Europeans. They dare not admit the intrusive West into the governing hierarchy of their State. This dread of the more powerful Christian world has nothing in reality to do with religious fanaticism. Indeed, we enormously exaggerate the part which pure fanaticism plays in the oppression of the Christian races. The Turks have never systematically tried to force the Christians of Turkey wholesale into Islam, as the Spaniards forced their own Jews and the Protestants of the Netherlands into Catholicism. By far the greater number of conversions have taken place through interest. The Christians wished to become members of the dominant caste and to enjoy its opportunities of acquiring wealth and power. The pressure of persecution and mis-government which brought these voluntary conversions about was, I imagine, rarely directly consciously to this end. Occasionally, perhaps, a village in a peculiarly important strategic position may have been systematically oppressed with this purpose. Forced conversions do no doubt still occur and were once common, but these are usually the effect rather of malice and anger than of proselytising zeal. If a village rebelled, it was often felt that nothing but a forced conversion would punish it adequately, or secure its future loyalty. Women are still captured and converted by force with a view to marriage; but there the motive is not fanaticism but lust. The explanation is usually rather political than religious—either it was necessary to strengthen the ruling caste by adding to its numbers, as, for example, by recruiting Christian boys for the Janissary

corps ; or else it was desirable to weaken a group of rebels who happened to be unbelievers. But the Turks do not, I think, convert by force as Europeans did, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, and from a sense that their duty to the misguided individual requires them to rescue him from his theological errors. The negative instance which proves that they are relatively tolerant in a somewhat contemptuous way is their treatment of the Jews. The Turkish Jews have no protector outside the Empire ; they have no political ambitions, and they are so weak and so scattered that it would be absurd to fear them. They accordingly enjoy complete liberty for the management of their religious and communal affairs ; they live on excellent terms with the Turk, and have no wish to exchange his rule for that of a Christian State.

Politics and religion have played their part in building up the Turkish system of ascendancy, but its basis is now economic. The doctrine that no Christian may hold an executive or administrative post is entrenched behind an impregnable barrier of vested interests. The Turks have become a parasitic race. Commerce they leave to Greeks and Jews. Manufactures are rarely attempted save in a few accessible centres, and then only by Europeans. For the sea the Turks have as little love as though they were still a nomad people of a continental steppe. In agriculture of a primitive kind they are more directly interested, but even as landowners their favourite practice is to leave the whole work of cultivation to Christian serfs and to draw a revenue in kind, where they have neither sunk capital nor applied themselves to the business of supervision. In European Turkey, at least, they are a sterile and unproductive class, which contributes nothing whatever to the work of the country, and lives entirely by the forced toil of a subject population. The methods and extent of this exploitation form a curious study, towards which some materials will be found in the next chapter. Its most serious aspect is probably to be found in the relation of peasant and landlord. It is enough to say here that this relation as it stands to-day could not survive the direct rule of Constantinople. It

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 27

depends upon the petty and diurnal violence which the retainers of the landed gentry exercise upon the villagers. A good police and accessible courts of justice would curb it at once ; while any humane Government would be compelled to modify the existing system of land-tenure by drastic agrarian legislation. Not a few of these wealthy landowners are doubtless uncomfortably aware that they possess no title deeds to the lands on which they have "squatted," and that knowledge alone must make them anxious to retain an administration which connives at their usurpation. Another not inconsiderable interest which sustains the system of Turkish ascendancy is brigandage, which in the western districts of Macedonia attains the dimensions of a staple industry. Yet more important is the system of taxation, by which the collection of the tithes is farmed out to local magnates who bid at auction for the annual privilege of despoiling villages. A ruthless man with devoted retainers may grow speedily rich by this method, and it is in fact the foundation of the wealth of large numbers of the local Turkish magnates. Time after time the system has been reformed and abolished, but the vested interest is stronger than the feeble liberalism of an occasional Vizier. The Turks are shrewd enough to understand that if they abolished tithe-farming they would risk the loss of the support which they receive to-day from the local *beys*—the men who feel when the Bulgarian peasants rally to the bands that their wealth and position are at stake. For the *bey* who levies the tithes of a village at the head of his retainers is the same man who burns it in time of insurrection. In the one capacity he is called a tax-farmer, in the other a *bashi-bazouk*. Finally, there is the vested interest of the officials and the military officers. The army and the Civil Service are the only professions which a Turk of the upper and middle classes cares to enter. They are both a strict preserve, in all their important ranks, for Mohamedans. Reform in any shape means the end of this monopoly, and against reform there is mobilised accordingly not merely national pride but professional jealousy. If administrative and military careers were open



to Christians, and if promotion went by merit, their mental alertness and better education would, either oust the majority of the Turks or compel them to alter their intellectual habits. It is upon this profitable ascendancy that the Turkish bureaucracy reposes. It is a governing class which, whether it be official or unofficial, lives on the backs of the Christian majority, and thrives only by governing.

It is this economic aspect of Turkish misrule which makes all hope of any reformation from within entirely visionary. It is true that the average Moslem of the upper classes in Macedonia is discontented. He is often even disloyal at heart. But his isolation as a member of a minority and his lack of education render him peculiarly amenable to the social pressure of the caste in which he is born. I knew rather intimately a certain *bey* of Castoria, an Albanian by race. He was a peculiarly gentle and courteous soul, prodigal in his hospitality and universal in his tolerance. He had inherited his wealth, and used his peasants well. He was totally uneducated, and by no means clever, so that it is fair to take his opinions as moderately typical.<sup>1</sup> For the present Sultan he had an unbounded contempt. He regarded the officials as parvenus and strangers, and would talk of them by no other name than "the asses of Yildiz." Although he was a comparatively young man (he is now dead), certainly under forty, his favourite theme was the rapid and alarming decay which he had witnessed in his own lifetime. Turkey was "going to the dogs," and he threw the whole blame upon Abdul Hamid. He had often been offered a post in the administration, but invariably refused it with disgust. He knew that a catastrophe was coming, and his wish was that it might come soon. He desired a European occupation as the only solution which would give fair play to the Mohamedan minority, and he would have welcomed any Power save Russia, while his preference was either for

<sup>1</sup> One can follow no other method with the Turks. It is never safe to talk politics in the presence of more than one of them, and one must know them well before they will talk politics at all.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 29

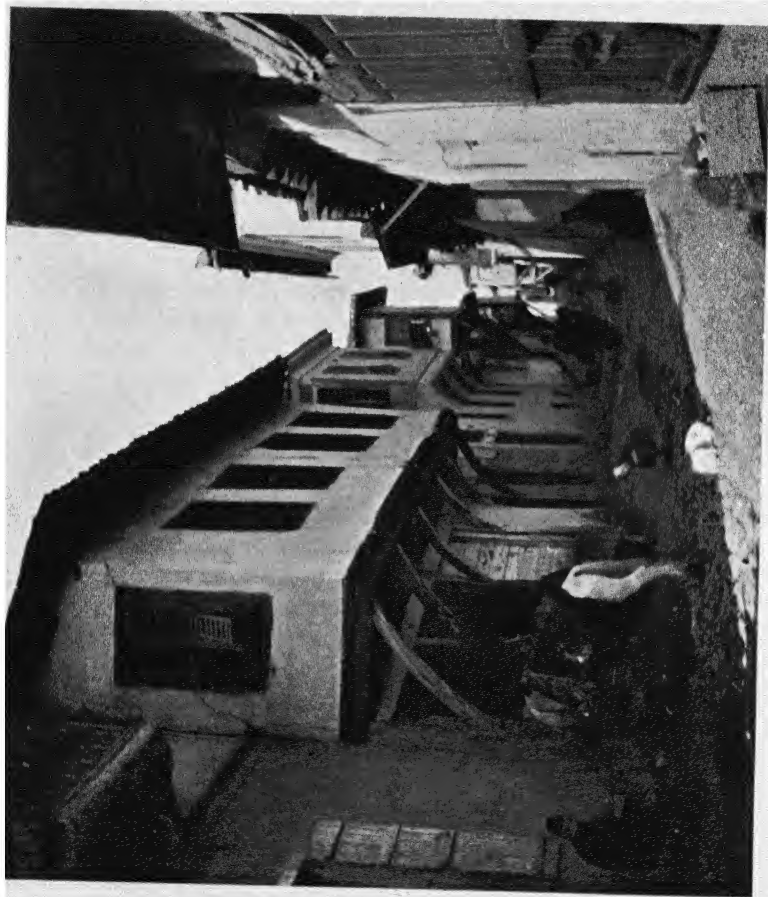
England or for Austria.\* But, despite these opinions, this excellent man was a stout pillar of Turkish rule, and during the rising of 1903 he was indefatigable as the president of the local commission which managed the provision and transport for the army. Another *bey* whom I knew fairly well, in the sense that I had his confidence (though to him I could talk only through one of his satellites who acted as interpreter), represented a very different type. He was clever, though quite uninstructed. He was by temperament a natural rebel and a restless man of action, and his sympathies were with the Albanian national movement. He was in the pay of at least one anti-Turkish organisation, but when I asked him if he had any thought of taking part in any overt action against a Government which he certainly hated, he replied with naïve frankness that he was a tithe-farmer. Other people did the same thing, he went on to explain; he never ill-used any one who was really poor; he knew he did wrong, but it was the only way of making money in Turkey, and if he did not do it some one else would. A more disinterested point of view was represented by a young officer, with whom I had many a long day's ride among the villages. He had a passion for education. He called himself a "young Turk," and his chief personal grievance was that he was forbidden to employ his leisure by learning French in the Catholic school at Monastir. Although of Greek extraction, he was certainly a patriotic Turk. He too believed that Turkey was "going to the dogs," and lamented the growing laxity of discipline in the army, which he attributed to the abolition of corporal punishment by the present Sultan. He was very bitter because, as he put it, the absence of roads, of police, and of education "blackened Turkey in the eyes of Europe." He admitted that the Christians were ill-used, but his favourite theme was that the Moslems are even more ruthlessly repressed, which in a sense is true; for while

\* A Turk who knows anything of Egypt is usually Anglophil. If he has friends in Bosnia he is Austrophil. One must make allowance for politeness in such conversations, but on the whole I believe that this confidence in England is general and sincere.

the Christians have their own schools and their independent bishops, Mohamedan education and the ecclesiastical system is entirely in the hands of the Government. He was a just and kindly man, deeply religious and upright according to his lights, but his mind was a chaos of shamefaced and scarcely conscious prejudices. "We Turks," he said one day as we passed a burned Bulgarian village, "ought to have risen as those men did." But when I suggested that the wise course would be to make common cause with the Christians, he exclaimed with deep feeling that rather than tolerate a successful Christian rising, the Turks would die to the last man and bury "their" country in their fall. "We came in with blood, and we will go out with blood." The tradition of ascendancy was ineradicable. He would admit that he had learned Turkish as a foreign tongue. He knew that three or four generations back his ancestors were Christians. Fanaticism he had none, and even displayed a curious sentimental reverence when he talked of a Christian Church. And yet politically he was Turkish of the Turks. For him the Empire was "our" country, and the sense of possession which he had acquired from the caste in which he was educated, dominated all his thinking.

While one might find some faint parallel to this spirit of ascendancy among the English in Ireland or the Magyars in Hungary, its manifestation in Turkey is completely Oriental. The Turks brought with them into Europe no conception of civil order, and they have remained so much a military caste that they have hardly felt the need of public security. They alone have the right to go armed, and while that is so, even the police is one of those superfluities which have been borrowed uncomprehended from Europe. The average landowner, at least in the more disturbed districts, has a keep beside his country house, and a bevy of armed retainers, who wear their revolvers even while they wait at his table. He would think it undignified to go abroad unattended, and his name is usually a terror, which protects him. For the dwellers in towns there is another system. If they visit





THE MAIN STREET, OCHRIDA

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 31

the country they hire a mounted gendarme to accompany them. You take your safety about with you. The conception is amazingly primitive, but it is thoroughly characteristic of the workings of the Turkish intellect. The mail-cart which labours once or twice a week over the ruined road between Ochrida and Monastir is always escorted by four or six mounted gendarmes. To understand an arrangement by which an organised police and a reliable criminal court would make an attack upon the mails unthinkable would puzzle the concrete Turkish mind.<sup>1</sup> As for criminal violence, the law of private vengeance is still supreme. We had in our employment at Ochrida an Albanian *cavass*, whose duty it was to guard the relief *dépôt* and carry money or messages. He was recommended to us by the prefect as a quiet, middle-aged, respectable man. And certainly anything more intensely respectable it would be difficult to imagine. He slept all day, he was sometimes tired—sure traits of respectability. He had regular habits. He dined every evening with his wife. He always left his rifle beside his boots in the same corner. He went out one day to dine as usual. He came back at the usual hour, and curled up on his mattress beside the wood fire. He seemed normal and at ease, and in his calm accents of every day he told how he had just committed a murder. He had found his wife in some alarm. A drunken Turkish soldier had mistaken his house for that of a Christian, and proceeded to rob it. Drunkenness was a venial offence, robbery natural; but the mistake was an unpardonable insult. Our respectable servant caught the intruder, beat him unmercifully, and flung him for dead out of his window into the street. He then dined comfortably, and strolled up to our *dépôt* to smoke his cigarette before turning in for the night. It was only when the news came that the soldier was not quite dead that he betrayed any concern. But next day the expected event happened quietly, and all risk of a vendetta was over. We supposed in our innocence that our *cavass* would be arrested, but nothing so uncomfortable happened.

<sup>1</sup> See note at end of chapter.

It was afterwards explained to us that he was a popular local man, with many friends. The soldier was a stranger from Asia Minor. When the murder of a Turkish soldier in uniform in the midst of a town can be regarded as an event beneath the notice of the law, it may be imagined how little is thought of an attack upon a Christian peasant in some remote village. An incident occurred near Ochrida which illustrated this aspect of the matter. An Albanian went by night into a Bulgarian village and fired into the house of a man whom he regarded as his enemy. He wounded his wife, his daughter, and an infant son. They were carried as patients into our hospital, and this naturally brought the affair prominently before the prefect, an able and enlightened man in his own way, rather sensitive to European criticism. He endeavoured to arrest the murderer, but the village took up his cause, and the gendarmes returned empty-handed. The prefect now decided to go in person, and marched upon the offending village at the head of three hundred regular troops. This display of force was overwhelming. The village did not resist, but it still refused to give evidence against the guilty man. The prefect returned to Ochrida with forty or fifty prisoners, kept them in gaol for three or four days, and then released them all. The incident was instructive, for the crime itself was gross. The prefect was the best Turkish official I have ever met. He was acting, moreover, under the eyes of Europeans, and during an epoch of "reform." And yet to punish a simple outbreak of private passion in which no political element was involved he had to mobilise the whole armed force of his district, and even then he failed. In a country where nothing short of an administrative earthquake can set the machinery of justice in motion, it is no matter for surprise that it is usually left to rust.

There is in Turkish administration a singular but quite intelligible contrast between the country and the larger cities. The cities are emphatically over-governed. The administration pries into every detail of the daily life of the people. The streets swarm with spies, and it is as difficult to avoid them as it is to escape stumbling over the

dogs. In Constantinople the system reaches its climax of absurdity, and the whole population seems to live by spying on itself. Even the Embassies are not exempt from this omnipresent parasitic life. I have heard a lady, who spent some weeks as a guest in the house of the Chancellor of a certain Embassy which is in high favour at Yildiz, describe how, on the evening of a dinner-party, two Turkish officers made their appearance unannounced and uninvited, sat down, without a word of explanation, to dinner, and listened, as well as their linguistic gifts allowed them, to the lightest word of general conversation. If a friendly European diplomatist can be victimised in this fashion, it may be imagined what is the lot of a prominent Christian dignitary or a too popular Turkish notable. The *cabinet noir* examines all correspondence, and to such a pitch is the dread of conspiracy carried that the post-office will accept no letters in Constantinople for delivery within the city itself. The precaution is characteristic of Turkish stupidity, for the last agency of which a conspirator would avail himself for the transmission of compromising correspondence is the Turkish post.

The country, on the other hand, is exempt from any systematic government. It is inhabited in Macedonia mainly by Bulgarians, and the Turk does not see why he should trouble himself to provide them with the machinery of order and security. Macedonia is a land of villages. Hardly anywhere outside Albania proper does one find little hamlets or scattered houses. To build an isolated cottage or a lonely farm-house would imply too much trust in one's fellow-men. Nothing would be easier than to police Macedonia by establishing one or two resident gendarmes of good character in all the larger villages. But that is a precaution which the Turks have never adopted. They leave the villages to their own devices, and, if trouble threatens, suddenly quarter troops upon them, not to protect, but to terrorise them. In Europe it is the remote and lonely situation which is thought unsafe. In Turkey the zone of danger lies rather along the frequented high-road. A village set on a hill, or hidden in some inaccessible glen,



enjoys a relative immunity from outrage. A village by the wayside is the prey of every passing brigand in or out of uniform. We found when we arrived in Macedonia last autumn, at the close of the insurrection, that the peasants from the remoter villages had all come back to the site of their ruined homes. But the villages situated along the high-roads were abandoned to desolation, and neither threats nor persuasion would induce their inhabitants to return. In two cases they even determined to use the opportunity to rebuild elsewhere, upon some lonelier hill-side, where the visits of travelling Turks would be less frequent. I confess that at first I rather inclined to the view of the unsympathetic, who conjectured that the peasants were deliberately making the most of their misfortunes, and were obeying orders from the revolutionary committee in refusing to return. Further knowledge convinced me that they did not exaggerate the danger of roadside life. Riding one day upon the high-road from the busy little garrison town of Klissoura to the railway at Sorovitch, at mid-day and within sight of the town, I came upon a brigand seated on a boulder which he had placed in the middle of the road, smoking his cigarette, with his rifle across his knees, and calmly levying tribute from all the passers-by. Near the same spot lay the burned and deserted village of Mokreni. Its peasants, more daring than the rest, had actually begun to rebuild it. They had cut and dressed the necessary timber, working in Mokreni by day and sleeping in Klissoura at night. As soon as the beams were ready the *bashi-bazouks* of a neighbouring Moslem village swooped down at night and carried off the labour of several weeks. After that experience the people of Mokreni remained in Klissoura, admiring the superior wisdom of those who had made no attempt to return. There could after all be no more sweeping condemnation of a Government than this—that safety is possible only beyond the reach of its arm.

The remoter villages do in the main lead their own life in their own way—provided there is no Moslem settlement in their immediate neighbourhood. Then indeed it is always

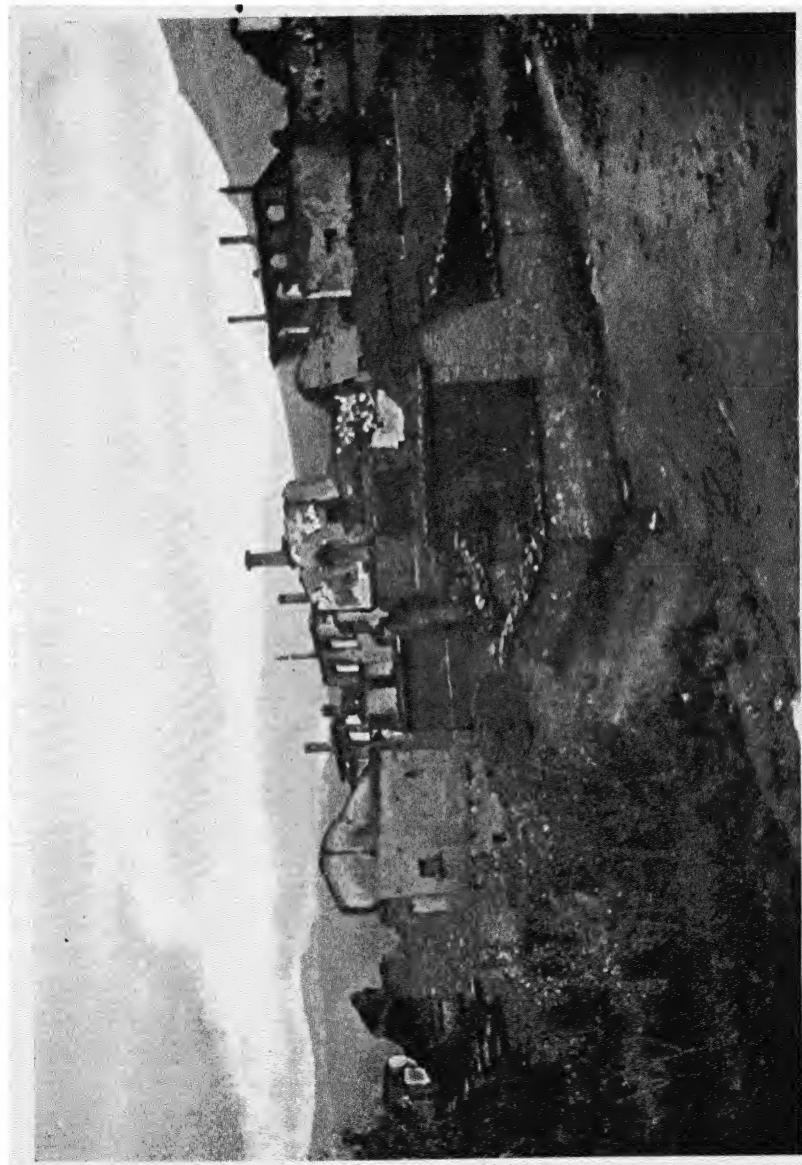
risky to stir far afield to cut wood or to tend sheep, save in Albanian districts, where distant errands are usually confided to the women, for a certain chivalry forms one of the many redeeming features in the Albanian character. But there are regions of Macedonia where one may ride for two or three days without seeing a uniform, or hearing a word of Turkish, or encountering a loyal pair of eyes. In such regions a Turkish visitation is a rare and terrible occurrence. The Government makes its presence felt only when its agents descend to collect the taxes, when a "flying" column saunters out to hunt an elusive rebel band, or a police expedition arrives to punish some flagrant act of defiance. Such occasions are infrequent, but they are apt to be memorable. In one of several well-defined ways the village may have challenged Turkish ascendancy. Perhaps it has resented the violence of a tax-collector; possibly it has harboured an armed party of insurgents whom it could not have resisted if it would; or, again, it may have caught and perhaps killed a neighbouring civilian Turk who had assaulted some girl of the place. In such cases vengeance is slow, capricious, but sure. At the least all the men who can be caught will be mercilessly beaten, at the worst the village will be burned and some of its inhabitants massacred. The "guilty" peasants have almost certainly fled long before the Turks arrive. But their relatives and neighbours must suffer in their place. A village is always held collectively responsible for the acts of its inhabitants, and the priest, teacher, and headmen are the chief sufferers. There is no system of police in Macedonia. There are only punitive expeditions.

But in the intervals between these catastrophes the countryside leads its own life of plodding industry—varied by conspiracy. In visiting the villages after the insurrection one realised how little the presence of the Turks in some distant garrison centre pervades and permeates their daily life. I more than once surprised a village where the young men were standing about in groups wearing their insurgent uniforms. Tchakalároff and several other Bulgarian chiefs were still prowling

about with the picked men of their autumn's levies. The Greeks, too, had a couple of bands on a war footing, and neither faction seemed to be seriously incommoded by the Turks. Within certain limits, and subject to occasional but terrible reprisals, any armed force, brigand or insurgent, Christian or Moslem, may do as it pleases in the Macedonian interior. The Turks are not so much a government as a capricious and unintelligent power of nature. Macedonia, during the winter of 1903-4, was not so much a conquered province as a desert swept by a human hurricane. It is in these conditions that the Bulgarian insurgent movement has grown up, a constructive organisation opposed to a negative and destroying force—a government within an anarchy.

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The government of Turkey may be, as one chooses to view it, an instructive study or a diverting amusement. The peasant in his brighter moments can sometimes see it in its aspect of humour, and there are to be found in collections of Bulgarian folk-songs some delightful satires on Turkish incompetence. But in the main it provokes less laughter than tears, and the pervading emotion under the Crescent is a paralysing fear. But fear in Macedonia is more than an emotion. It is a physical disease, the malady of the country, the ailment that comes of tyranny. One enters some hovel which a peasant family calls its home. In the oppressive darkness one becomes gradually aware of a living something which stirs or groans in the gloomiest corner on the floor beneath a filthy blanket. Is it fever, one asks, or smallpox? And the answer comes in the accents of custom and commonplace, "He is ill with fear." The word becomes the key to half the circumstances of existence. Fear is the dominant, the ever-present motive. It builds villages. It dictates migrations. It explains deceptions. It has created the morals of a country. The Bulgarians are, of all races, the most stolid and enduring; they seem insensible to pain, and proof against panic. It is no common shock which wrings a cry from them or unsteadies their nerves,



"A DESERT SWEEP BY A HURRICANE."--THE VILLAGE OF ZAGORITCHANI AFTER THE RISING IN 1903



## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 37

for their physical organisation has adapted itself to their political conditions. And yet fear is the great fact of their daily lives. Looking back upon my wanderings among them, a procession of ruined minds comes before the memory—an old priest lying beside a burning house speechless with terror and dying slowly; a woman who had barked like a dog since the day her village was burned; a maiden who became an imbecile because her mother buried her in a hole under the floor to save her from the soldiers; a lad who turned ill with "fear" from the moment when a soldier put a knife to his throat; children who flee in terror at the sight of a stranger, crying "Turks! Turks!" These are the human wreckage of the hurricane which usurps the functions of a Government. And upon those also who escape, sane and whole, the terror sets its indelible mark. In that world of nightmare a massacre is always possible. One can hardly spend a week in such a town as Monastir without noting on some peaceful afternoon that the streets are strangely silent and the shutters of the shops are closed. Is it the Jews' Sabbath, one asks, or an Orthodox feast-day? But a glance at the names over the closed doors shows that it is some rite which affects all creeds alike. It is simply that most ordinary of all social phenomena in Turkey—a panic. Some rumour has run round the bazaar of impending trouble, and every house has closed its doors. The calendar is marked with its appointed days of fear. It may be the months of Ramazam and Bairam when the Moslems are supposed to be excitable and dangerous. It may be Easter when the Orthodox processions are thought to excite their fanaticism. Perhaps it is the festival of Saints Cyril and Methodius when the Bulgarians remember that they are a nation. Or else it is St. George's Day, when spring begins and the insurgent leaves his winter quarters—the day when "the snow melts on the Balkans." The occasion matters little—there is always a good reason for fear. The European in Turkey, secure under consular protection, because he casts the shadow of an ironclad wherever he moves, is apt to make light of these fears.

But even he has his illuminating experiences. He wakes, perhaps, on some wintry morning to find that while the frost performed its secret ministry in the darkness, a guard of Turkish troops as silent, as unsummoned as the frost, had taken their station and kept vigil at his gate—sent, as he may afterwards learn, by the prefect who had heard that the Moslem mob had taken a vow to make an end of the Giaour.

Massacres rarely happen. Even murders do not pass unnoticed. But the chance of massacre can never be forgotten, and the risk of murder is ever present. It is this rather than the actual outrages which makes the ruinous insecurity of Turkey. The native mind is always on the alert to divine the uncertain developments of an event, and every incident has its penumbra of alarming possibilities. A Turk murders a Christian, but matters may not end there. It may be the beginning of some epidemic violence, some studied series of excesses. One assassination in the market-place will suffice to close the bazaar and to sow fear in every home. And this has its influence on the whole social and economic life of the country. There was a village named Krusje, not far from Resna, which was burned to the ground during the late insurrection. The peasants, however, were sturdy and resourceful. They found a temporary home in a neighbouring village, and maintained themselves by burning charcoal on the mountains. They had no need of charity until January. On Christmas Day two of their number were caught on the high-road and wantonly murdered. A week afterwards another of these charcoal-burners, going about his work, was met by soldiers and beaten severely. Ten days later I was in the village (Jancovetz) where most of the Krusje families had found refuge. The beaten man was still seriously ill, and I had scarcely visited him before there arrived some seven men of the little community, hasty and empty-handed. Some were blood-stained, some lame, some bruised, some little more than frightened. The same soldiers from the same garrison had set upon them, armed, on the same mountain-side, beaten them, and

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 39

robbed them of their tools and their beasts. It was the end of charcoal-burning for the winter, and the village of Krusje came upon the books of the Relief Fund. These men were not cowards. They probably had their rifles hidden somewhere on the hillside against the next insurrection. But no Christian may carry arms even in self-defence. They could only bow to the menace and wait for a distant revenge and a yet more doubtful liberation. In a society thus dominated by fear there can be no enterprise, no commerce, no steady industrial life.<sup>1</sup> In the town of Resna, the centre of this particular district, there were several comparatively wealthy men, who had no undertakings of their own which could have employed their spare capital. Ten villages in the immediate neighbourhood had been burned. The peasants were eager to borrow money, on the security of their land, to purchase plough-oxen, utensils, and building material. But no one was willing to lend, even at the exorbitant rates of interest (say 60 per cent.) which rule in Macedonia. The risks were too great—brigandage, assassination, and insurrection. For one purpose only would a usurer lend money—to assist a peasant to leave the country. Over three thousand peasants are said to have left Macedonia in the winter of 1903-4 for America. The creditor was going beyond the reach of the Turkish courts to an unknown land. He might fail or die or forget his bond. But the moneylender preferred to trust to his bare word of honour rather than accept a mortgage in his own district, subject to all the local risks of violence and chicanery. There could be no more eloquent witness than this crude economic fact to the reign of fear and insecurity which is the normal consequence of the Turkish system of ascendancy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that all the incidents recorded in this chapter happened in "reformed" Macedonia after the promulgation of the Mürzsteg programme.

<sup>2</sup> The result of the insecurity of the roads is that travelling in Macedonia is reduced to a minimum. An irritating and expensive system of passports restricts free circulation between one province (vilayet) and another. The peasants, who have less to fear from robbers than the middle classes, are the least incommoded, but even they dread a journey. Where railways have not yet penetrated, there is so little intercommunication between one town and another, that no system of



## NOTE TO CHAPTER I

## § LAW COURTS AND FINANCE

On reading over this general chapter on Turkish rule I notice that I have said little or nothing about the administration of justice, and, beyond defending the omission, I have not much to add. One often reads about the terrible abuses of the Turkish courts, but I can hardly recall an instance in which I have ever heard any one in Turkey talking of the courts as a real factor in his daily life. They are so thoroughly bad and corrupt that no one ever dreams of having recourse to them for the redress of an injury, and it is exceedingly interesting to note how well, on the whole, society manages without law courts. I do not think there is more trickery or injustice between man and man in Macedonia than there is in Europe—always excepting the relationship between Turks and their Christian dependents. But it would be better if there were no civil courts at all, for at present the wealthy of both creeds, who can afford to bribe, are apt to use them as a means of over-reaching the poor. As for the criminal courts, they are so much a mere department of the executive that they can hardly be said to exist. A man may be imprisoned for months or years without a trial, and as often as not he is released without a trial—particularly if his friends have managed to collect a sufficiently handsome bribe. When a trial does take place before judges who are as corrupt and ignorant as they are subservient and prejudiced, it is, as a rule, a mere formality, particularly if the accused is a Christian. It is not accurate to say, as is sometimes done, that the word of a Christian is not admitted as evidence, but it is true that no evidence is considered at all unless it confirms the preconceptions of the court. The Christians occasionally attempt to set up private tribunals of their own to judge disputes which arise among themselves, and the Bulgarian Revolutionary Committee, always anxious to act as a State within the State, encourages these experiments, but they are always regarded as highly seditious and punished accordingly.

Turkish finance, on the other hand, would make a curious and amusing subject for study, but really when one has said that everything is chaotic and corrupt, it is scarcely necessary to go into detail. Stupidity and rascality are almost equally to blame. The officials are

stage coaches or public diligences exists—partly because travellers are few, and partly because the roads are always unsafe and frequently impassable. The townsfolk of the wealthier classes rarely dare to visit the country at all. I knew a Bulgarian in Ochrida, an old man, who owned several farms not many miles from the town, which in all his life he had never visited. A Greek in Monastir, who drew all his income from his farms, had let five years elapse without once inspecting them. A Bulgarian in Resna, who had a large estate about six miles from the town, was much concerned to know how far it had been damaged during the insurrection, but though he was certainly not a timid man, he allowed nine months at least to pass without going to see it. To travel at all in winter is thought to be foolhardy; to travel after dark is treated as a clear proof of insanity.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH RULE 41

quite ignorant of accounts, and indeed to keep accurate ledgers in the Turkish language would be difficult.

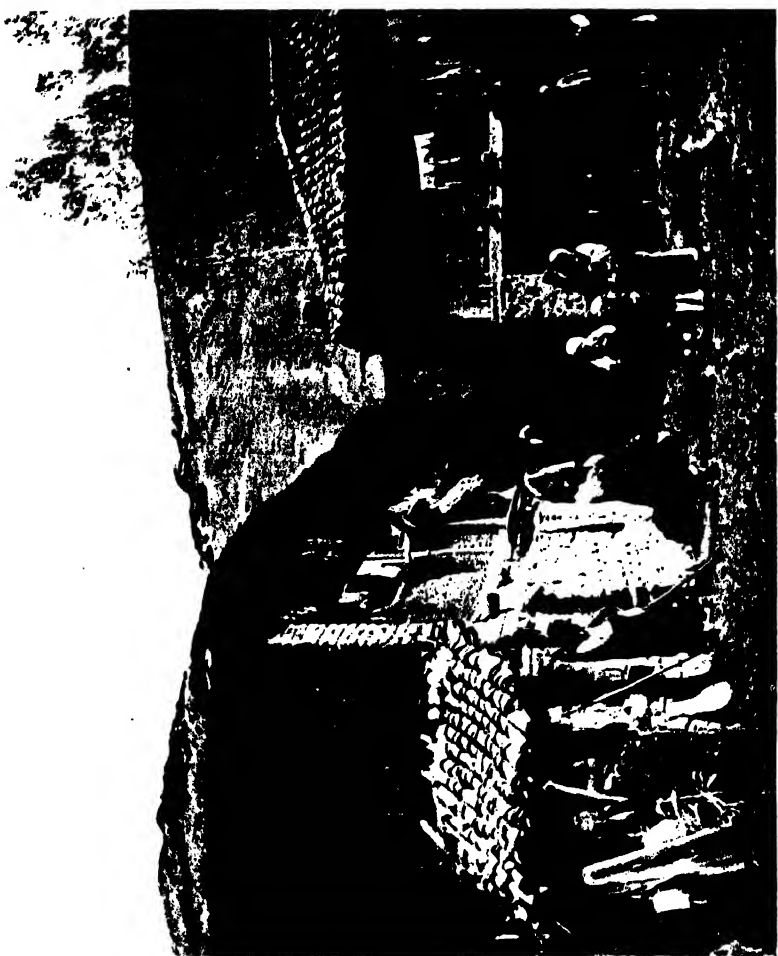
Provincial finance suffers under the two main evils—(a) the tithes in a very large number of districts are mortgaged to provide the interest on the Ottoman Public Debt. (b) The provinces are never treated as self-contained units with local budgets of their own. At any moment they may be called upon to pay a draft, known as a "havaleh," which has been drawn against their treasuries by the Imperial Government. These drafts are given without any preliminary inquiry as to whether the province in question has a real surplus after meeting its own obligations—it is enough that it has some cash in its chest or can raise it by taxation.

It must not be supposed that the excessive burdens which the individual has to pay really go to enrich the State. The tax-collector defrauds his master as well as his victims. A favourite device is to leave a man in peace for several years, and then suddenly to demand the arrears of his house-tax or of the tax on wages or even of the capitation tax. He cannot pay, but to avoid being thrown into prison he will give a substantial *backsheesh* to the official. Sometimes in return for a bribe the collector will assess a substantial three-storey house at a lower figure than he imposes on a mud-cabin. Of the customs, every traveller who has paid the dollar which is openly demanded of him by the revenue officer who examines his trunk in the railway station at Constantinople, will form his own impressions. But one need not accumulate examples. It is a system which wrongs every one concerned. The official receives no salary, and he robs the Exchequer and the citizen with an impartial hand.

## CHAPTER II

### VILLAGE LIFE IN MACEDONIA

**I**T was once my good fortune to obtain from the Vali of Salonica an explanation of the Macedonian problem as concise as it was true. "It is all the fault of the Bulgarian schools," he declared. "In these nests of vice the sons of the peasants are maintained for a number of years in idleness and luxury. Indeed, they actually sleep on beds. And then they go back to their villages. There are no beds in their fathers' cottages, and these young gentlemen are much too fine to sleep on the floor. They try the life for a little, and then they go off and join the revolutionary bands. What they want is a nice fat Government appointment." The Vali succeeded in condensing in these brief and characteristic sentences the main facts of the situation, and his summary had the merit of illustrating not merely the Bulgarian, but also the Turkish standpoint. The question of beds (to adopt the Vali's formula) is at the root of the Macedonian difficulty. The motive of revolt, in other words, lies as much in the economic grievances of the peasantry as in the political aspirations of the educated class. In a land which ought to be one of the richest corners of Europe the villagers are sunk in a hopeless poverty—a poverty, moreover, which their rulers regard as their natural and predestined lot. On the other hand, there are the Bulgarian schools busily at work in every important centre and engaged in giving to thousands of teachable lads an education which would fit them for a modern and civilised society. They leave the school to plunge into the Middle Ages. There is no scope for their energy in their





native village. Official careers are closed to them, and in the long run, finding themselves unfitted for their environment, the only course which remains to them is to alter the environment itself. It is this stagnation, tempered by anarchy and varied by famine, which is the real fact behind Macedonian revolts. The massacres and atrocities on which Europe is apt to fix its attention are only the symptoms of a much graver and more chronic disorder. They are not the causes, but the consequences of revolution. If one would know why it is that the peasants acquire arms, enrol themselves in bands and expose themselves to the hazards of a general rising, one must inquire a little into the daily realities of village life.

There is nothing in the approach to the average Macedonian village to suggest poverty or distress. It is a genial climate, and the soil will grow all that the peasant need use and much that he might export. Rice flourishes in the low-lying plains. Maize has found a second home in these regions, and wheat is nearly everywhere abundant. Wine, tobacco, and opium yield a plentiful revenue ; and to reach the village you must often pierce through a thick verdure of fruit trees. On the downs around it you will meet the lads of the hamlet playing on their home-made flutes of reed among a herd of sheep. In the ponds and ditches outside it hideous black buffaloes with white eyes are standing immersed in mud. Pigs tumble against your legs, the only creatures which seem quite free, since no Moslem marauder will touch them. There is an air of obtrusive untidiness, but even untidiness demands a certain quantity of gear. The houses are of mud, or in a hilly country of rough undressed stone. The roofs are carelessly thatched and everything speaks of squalor, but it is none the less a disorder which brilliant sunshine and balmy air may render picturesque. It is only when you hint that you would like to rest for a while beneath a roof that the revelation begins. The villagers, from an instinct of hospitality, will conduct you to the house of the wealthiest inhabitant ; but in truth the shades of difference are imperceptible to the eyes of a stranger. Windows are often non-existent, and where they

are to be found they are excessively small. The floor is of undulating earth, and for beds there are home-made mats of straw. A three-legged stool or two and a few pots of earthenware or tin are all the property that is visible. There may perhaps be a box which contains the home-made gala dresses of the women. One by one the family flocks in, and presently it dawns upon you that in the obscurity of this single room dwell, it may be, seventeen or eighteen persons—married couples of two generations, and young children of three or four mothers. And then at length one realises the meaning of the Vali's economic theory. Late and early, winter and summer, these seventeen peasants are out in the fields, planting their maize and tobacco with scrupulous fingers, driving behind the wooden plough the old ox on whose life hangs the hope of harvest, cutting wood on the mountain leagues away, or, it may be, tramping ten miles to market to sell six eggs for threepence—and here are the fruits of their toil. The labour and the parsimony of generations, the joint work of brothers and sisters, the inheritance of a whole growing tribe of little ones—they are all represented by the mud hovel with the earthen pots and the mats of straw.

What, then, becomes of all the stolid industry of the Macedonian peasant? Watch him from your train as it creeps through the country in the grey dawn, and as soon as you can see anything you will see him faring afield with his oxen and his plough. He takes no siesta at noon, and he labours till sundown. Much of his toil no doubt is unremunerative and he can seldom reach the best market. His plough is the wooden thing which Cain may have used in Eden, and the roads that should bring his produce to town serve also as channels for the winter cataracts. But for all that, he makes much wealth which he does not enjoy. His first complaint to you will be of the tax-collector. The fiscal system of Turkey begins with a heavy indirect tax of 8 or 11 per cent. on all imports—a serious burden, since it is levied not only upon foreign produce, but even upon native merchandise transported from one Turkish province to another. It rakes in a little gain by a monopoly

of tobacco. But it presses on the peasant chiefly by direct imposts which must be paid in cash. There are taxes on landed property, on cattle, on sheep, and on fruit trees, tithes on every species of harvest, and a poll-tax to which only Christians are liable, amounting to ten shillings per annum for every male. To complete these exactions with a touch of irony, there is also an education tax and a heavy road-tax for the maintenance of the indescribable highways.

In a certain typical village called Mavrovo (Caza Tetovo) some careful investigations made by one member of the consular corps in Uskub and checked independently by a colleague, went to show that the average peasant family could count, after satisfying the landlord and tax-gatherer, on a net income of about £10. In direct taxes under all heads this village of 150 houses paid £T530, or about £3 10s. for each household. But it is only when one looks at the items of the account that one realises how oppressive the total was in fact.

The main impost is the tithe on the harvest. The Government is much too indolent to collect it directly. Every year the tithes of each village are put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder. He may be a Jew speculator, but more often he is some wealthy *bey* of the neighbourhood. He makes his profit as he pleases, and the amount which he pays into the treasury for the right of collection bears very little relation indeed to the amount which he really collects. This system of tax-farming has been abolished more than once by Imperial decrees. It persists for two very sufficient reasons. In the first place it serves to keep the local Mohamedan gentry loyal. This is particularly the case when they happen to be Albanians. They detest the Turks, they dislike the Sultan, and they discuss his creatures with the utmost freedom, but the profits which they draw from corruption make them passive and tolerant malcontents. In the second place the system survives because the bureaucracy also profits by it. If a tax-farmer has been notoriously tyrannical, he can always be made to disgorge a portion of his plunder as hush money, and of the difference between the legal tithe and



the sum actually collected, I suspect that a very fair proportion goes into the pockets of the officials. As to the methods of extortion, they present an infinite variety. The most obvious is to exaggerate the amount of the harvest. It must not be supposed that the tax-collector takes the trouble to weigh the grain or to measure it. He marches into the granary, glances hastily round, and writes down the first estimate which occurs to him. To complain would be not only useless but dangerous. I once visited a village in Malesia (Ochrida) a few hours after the tax-collector had made his rounds. At the door of a fairly prosperous house the women were crying and wringing their hands. They led me in and showed me a heap of maize-cobs which the tax-collector had just estimated at an enormous figure. To test the matter we set children to strip the cobs, and then measured the grain. It was just one-fifth of the estimate. To complete the story, when the matter came to the knowledge of the Turkish officer who accompanied me in charge of the escort, which is forced upon every traveller, the headman came hastily up and declared that everything the villagers had told me was a parcel of lies! He dreaded the vengeance of the tax-farmer, who was a powerful local *bey*. Another favourite method, when the tithe is paid in money, is to over-estimate not merely the amount of the crop, but its current market-price. At Mavrovo, for example, the tax-farmer adopted the simple expedient of declaring that the hay was worth twenty paras the oke. The price in the nearest market-town was actually six paras. The result was, of course, since he had the right to take the equivalent in cash of one-seventh of the hay-harvest, and also the right to fix the scale by which its price should be estimated, that the village paid more than thrice its legal due. He had his gendarmes behind him. There is no redress, and the collection is usually made with every detail of stupid brutality. An impost which may be just tolerable in a good year is ruthlessly levied when the harvest is bad. It is a common incident for a village to cut down its fruit trees to avoid the tax upon them. Nominally there are fixed seasons when taxes become payable, but if the exchequer

is empty these restrictions are soon forgotten. When I was in Monastir in the spring of 1903, the army contractors had struck, and the municipality was obliged to find rations for the troops. Meantime the tax-collectors were doing their best to replenish the war chest. Taxes which are due in quarterly instalments were being gathered in advance. It was early summer, and the peasant, whose corn-bin had long been empty, had exhausted his credit. I talked with the headman of one little village where the gendarmes had suddenly swooped down to demand four quarters' dues in one lump sum. Eight peasants in this hamlet had nothing to pay, and asked for leave to go into the market to sell their lambs. Leave was refused, and the peasants were severely beaten. But, indeed, the statistics of the *corvée* are a proof in themselves of the oppressive incidence of the taxes. If a peasant is quite unable to pay his taxes, and if he has nothing which he can sell to meet them, he must join the gangs which are said to be repairing the roads—what they actually do I could never discover, for certainly the roads show little evidence of their labour. The peasant dreads a journey, he leaves his village reluctantly, and above all he trembles at the risks involved in this forced toil with the soldier and the gendarme at his elbow. None the less, I found that in one of the most prosperous villages near Uskub (Coutchevishta), out of a male population of 560 no less than 370 men had been obliged last year to work off their obligations to the tax-collectors by joining the *corvée*.

Where the tax-collector reaps, the Albanian gleans. The gendarmerie, which itself is largely composed of brigands out of work, finds it prudent as a rule to make terms with any notable robber. A wise village will take the same course. For a certain sum paid annually an Albanian chief will undertake to protect a tributary village, or if the village is outside the Albanian sphere of influence, it is generally obliged to have its own resident brigands, who may or may not be Albanians. If the village belongs to a Turkish landlord, these men are generally chosen from among his retainers. They are known under the name of *bekchi*, or

rural guards. They are necessary because the Christian population is absolutely unarmed and defenceless. To a certain extent they guarantee the village against robbers from outside, and in return they carry on a licensed and modified robbery of their own. They support the Turkish landowner against his Christian serfs; and in a mixed village they back the Moslem villagers in any roguery or violence which they may wish to practise on their Christian neighbours. There are of course honourable men among them, who retain the old Albanian traditions of loyalty and chivalry. But, in general, their conduct is what the conduct of armed men among an unarmed subject race<sup>1</sup> will always be. The rural guard exacts a substantial ransom in cash for his services. For a consideration he will often undertake to compel a reluctant father to give his daughter to an unwelcome suitor. He levies certain traditional dues—*e.g.*, blackmail upon every maid who marries. The sum varies with the ability of her father and her husband to pay, and in default of payment the *bekchi* will exercise the *jus primæ noctis*. Indeed, an experienced consul in Monastir, an able man who had studied the country for many years, declared roundly that these men simply treat the women of the village as their harem. Beyond this they take what they desire in food or in services. In cash their exactions vary with their reputation for ferocity. It is quite easy to have precise information. The village of Mavrovo, for example, had seven of these parasites. They received from £7 to £20 apiece. In other words, the average household with its annual net income of £10 paid away about £1 10s. to purchase the good-will of these domestic marauders.

There are considerable local differences among Macedonian villages, and the chief factor in measuring their happiness is the character of their neighbours. A village in an isolated position, or in a district wholly peopled by

<sup>1</sup> In the districts where the Bulgarian Committee is active most of the villages have, in fact, acquired a certain number of rifles. But these must be kept buried. They are for use when the hour of insurrection comes, and they cannot be worn or displayed or used to prevent or to resent a personal injury. It is really more dangerous for a Christian to have a rifle than to be without one.



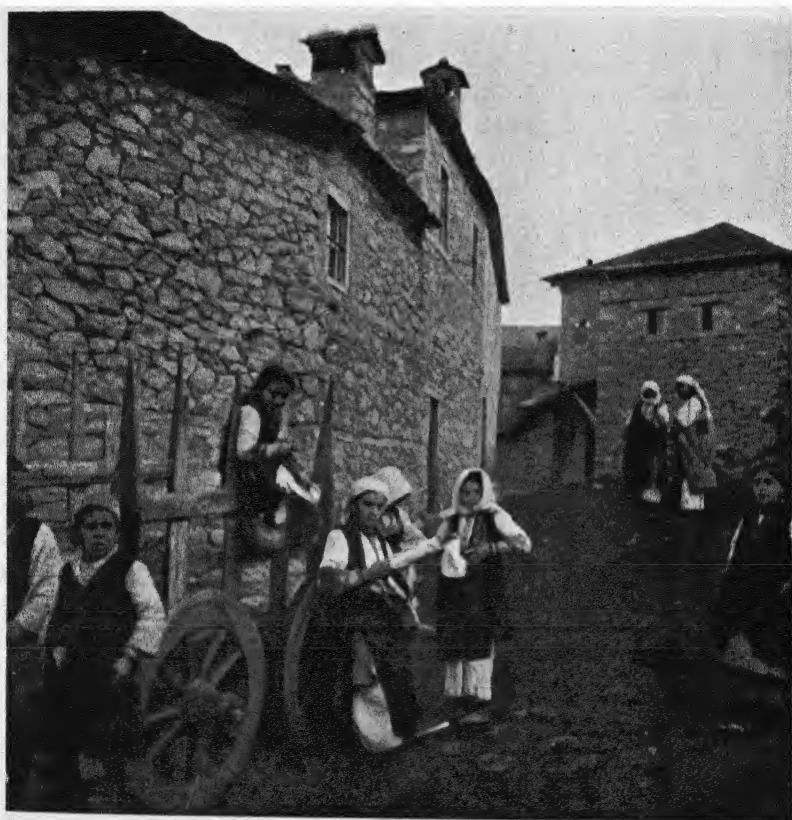
PEASANTS FROM A POOR VILLAGE. (OCHRIDA)



Christians, may enjoy comparative security, and raise itself under favourable conditions to a certain rude affluence. The proximity of a village where the Turks are fanatical at once depresses its whole standard of living. The worst case of all is that of the Slavonic population, which borders on the Albanian country—from Old Servia in the north down to the glens of Kitchevo and Ochrida, which are exposed to the continual raiding of the clansmen of Dibra. In some of these valleys the Albanian invasion is an annual event, in others it is chronic. Cattle are lifted, crops of corn or hay are carried away before they can be garnered. There are seasons when it is impossible to cut wood on the hillside, or, indeed, to venture outside the precincts of the village. There are four villages in an abandoned glen to the west of Kitchevo which reckon on four or five visitations every year. In 1903 they were looted and burned to the ground, but as the Albanians during the license of the insurrection went further afield and raided afterwards in richer districts, we found these villages fairly contented. As they had had their customary punishment early in the season and got it over quickly, they considered that on the whole they had passed a nice quiet year. Perhaps the worst scourge of these regions is the Albanian pastime of kidnapping, to which the tribes of Dibra are specially addicted. The method is to capture stragglers, usually a solitary lad or an old man who is surprised cutting wood or herding sheep at a distance from the village. He is carried off to Dibra and kept there until his ransom is paid. An enterprising *bey* will sometimes have several of these captives at once in his tower. They are sometimes fettered and driven out at sunrise with the cattle to labour in the fields till evening. I knew one family in the Malesia (Ochrida) region to which this catastrophe had happened thrice within the memory of a young man who cannot have been more than thirty years of age. I knew another case in which the ransom demanded for a young boy was as much as £100 (about £93). His family were no more than peasants, though of the wealthier class. Half the money was found by selling their flocks and their land, the other half was provided by

the elder brother, who earned it by leaving his wife and children and working for five years in Constantinople. Indeed, these exactions are a constant cause of migration, and the Malesia villages only maintain themselves by sending their more enterprising members to labour in Austria.

If the villages on the marches of Albania are constantly on the edge of famine and extermination, the southern country of the Monastir vilayet (province) is relatively prosperous. Their Albanian neighbours belong to the milder Tosk race. There are few estates (*tchifliks*), and most of the villages own their own lands. But agriculture is comparatively unimportant. The peasantry has abandoned the struggle with the tax-collector and with nature, and lives by migratory labour. Each village has its own characteristic trade. One goes to work in market-gardens near Constantinople, and hawks their produce. Others have a monopoly of what we would call the dairy business, and grow rich by selling *kaimak* (a sort of sweet junket). A third has a reputation for its carpenters, and a fourth for its masons, and these wander all over the Levant, building wherever there is a demand. One little village has a traditional connection with the building trade of Athens, and nearly half of its families own houses in the Greek capital, which they have built with their own hands, and from which they draw a comfortable rent. Other districts prefer to work in Bulgaria or in Roumania. The less thrifty are content with an absence of a year or two, at the end of which they return with savings that range from £15 to £30—an appreciable capital in this primitive country. The richest village that I came across, Smerdesh, now a mere heap of charred ruins, boasted that it reached this pre-eminence because its young men are enterprising enough to spend as much as seven continuous years abroad, at the end of which they will return with no less than £200 or £300 in hand. The result is that these villages bear little resemblance to the miserable agricultural hamlets of the country round Ochrida or Uskub. The houses are large and comparatively well built. Each village boasts a thriving school and three



A PROSPEROUS BULGARIAN VILLAGE AMONG THE HILLS.  
(BRUSNIK, NEAR MONASTIR)





or four shops, while their churches are large and almost ostentatious. These communities form an interesting exception to the general poverty, but it is none the less an exception which proves that the only way to thrive in Macedonia is to leave it.

The importance of migratory labour in Macedonia is an essentially unhealthy symptom. It is sparsely peopled, and much of its surface lies waste and derelict, abandoned to undrained marshes. It is only because the current of its economic life is stagnant that the enterprising peasant is driven to work beyond its frontier. But, despite this significant phenomenon, its main business is agriculture, and the conditions under which it is carried on, and more especially the system of land tenure, are of the first importance for the happiness of its peoples.

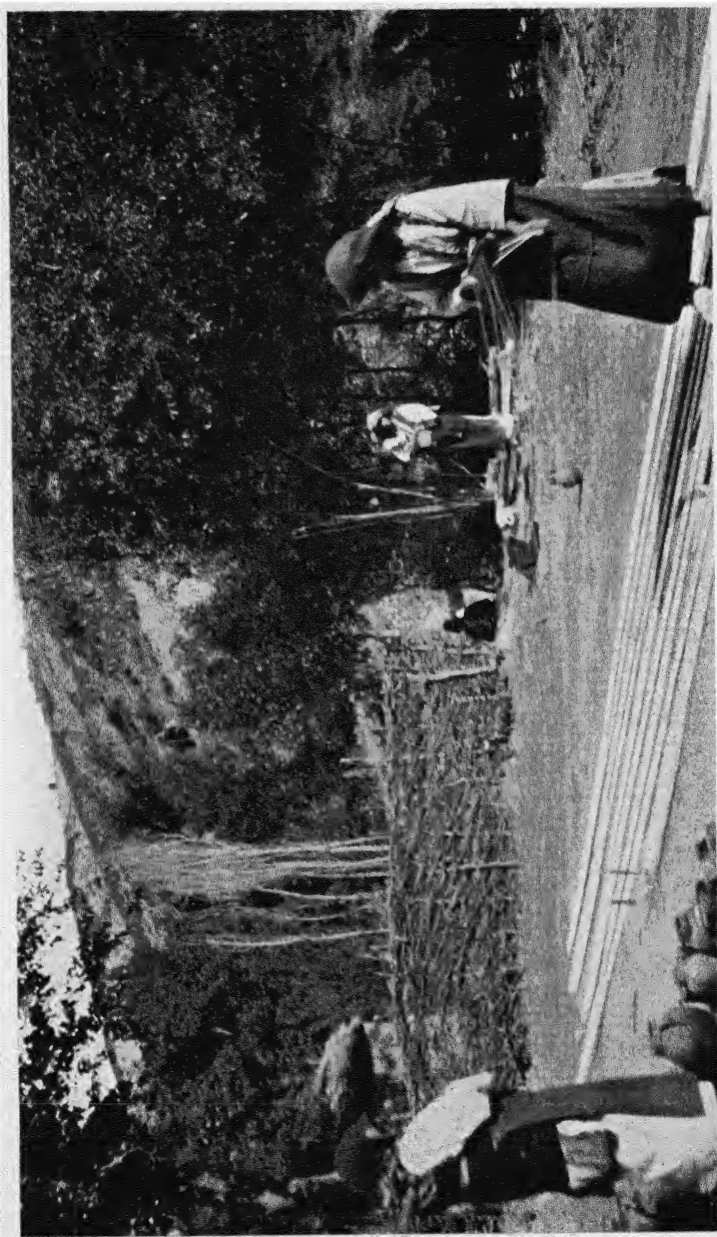
More grievous even than the exactions of the tax-collector and the vexations of the rural guard is the relation of abject dependence in which the peasant often stands to his landlord. The system of land tenure varies a good deal in Macedonia. There are some fortunate and relatively prosperous villages where the peasants own their fields and dwell in a compact mass in a purely Christian village. At the other extreme there are villages where the men are mere day-labourers. Occasionally the landlord is a Christian, but when he is a Greek speculator residing in town I doubt whether he allows much sympathy or fellow-feeling to enter into his dealings with his Slavonic peasants. The majority of the villages of Macedonia belong to a Turkish *bey*, who works his field on a system of *métayage*, or profit-sharing. The land and the cottages belong to the *bey*, who supplies seed and sometimes provides salt and petroleum, besides allowing the peasants to cut wood. The peasant finds the labour, the plough, and the draught animals, and besides working on the fields, he is liable to considerable demands in the shape of unpaid labour on the *bey's* private farm and in his mill, besides hewing wood for him and transporting his produce *gratis* to market. He pays no rent in money, but shares the produce of the fields. The *bey* receives a clear half of the harvest ; the peasant keeps the other half,

but pays his share of the tithe. The same system obtains more or less in some parts of Greece, but there the landlord is content with one-third of the harvest, and there is no tithe. Roughly speaking, the average peasant household produces about £25 per annum. Of this £3 10s. goes to the tax-collector and £1 10s. to the rural guard, otherwise the resident brigand; £10 (and an unspecified amount of labour into the bargain) goes to the Turkish *bey*, while £10 remains for the peasant. A completer system of spoliation and exploitation it would be hard to imagine.

It would be easy to draw an exaggerated moral from such a typical budget as this. There is in some regions of Macedonia a degree of poverty that is abject and grinding. The Albanian marches live beneath a constant threat of famine, and there are miserable villages elsewhere which know the debasing fear that the daily bread will not suffice for bare subsistence. But on the whole, the grievance of the peasantry is that they labour for masters who acknowledge no duties in return for the privileges they enjoy. It is the proportion between rent and income, between taxation and earnings, that is wrong. For when all is said money goes so far in Turkey that an average family can somehow contrive to live upon the poor residuum of £10 that is left to it from the £25 which it earns. On this primitive level the bounty of nature is more important than the greed of the conqueror. The peasants are inured to hardship. The weaklings are weeded out by cold and coarse food and epidemic disease.<sup>1</sup> The endurance of those who survive almost passes belief. I well remember a sharp December morning when I stood, warmly clad in a thick overcoat, shivering in the intense frost and the biting wind, in an upland Albanian village near Ochrida. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I became aware of a little girl of seven or eight standing laughing in front of me, barefoot, bareheaded, and literally naked, save that a

<sup>1</sup> Smallpox, happily in a mild form, is rarely absent. Typhus and diphtheria are common. Consumption is much dreaded, while tumours, cancer, and bone-diseases work frightful havoc. There are virtually no hospitals and few competent doctors.





PEASANTS WEAVING NEAR OCHRIDA

loose jacket covered her back. She was not a poor man's child. She turned out to be the daughter of the headman in whose house I had passed the night—a hospitable old marauder who had grown rich on the proceeds of his raids. It is true that to our thinking the peasantry are often poorly clad, but I am not convinced that this is really felt to be a hardship. It is true that they have no money, but on the other hand they have no artificial wants. Their material life is in all essentials that which their ancestors led a thousand years ago. From the civilised world they ask only Russian petroleum,<sup>1</sup> the cheapest of German cutlery, English sewing cotton and coarse calico, cigarette papers from France, Austrian sugar, and coffee from Asia. All else the village makes for itself. The staple food is bread made from a mixture of wheat with rye or maize—the flour coarsely ground by water-power by the local millers. Meat the peasant seldom touches, except on the greater feast days, nor does he make much use of milk foods. His favourite relishes are red peppers, garlic, onions, and haricot beans, and with the aid of these he is content to subsist on a monotonous diet of bread. It is the cheapest food which one could well imagine. For clothing, both men and women rely on the magnificent homespun cloth, made from the wool of their own sheep, carded, spun, and woven with primitive wooden instruments made in the village itself. A costume will last for half a lifetime, and in some districts the women's garments are embroidered with singular taste and skill from traditional designs. Each village has its own unvarying fashion, and there is little room for diversity either in quality or kind. Every detail of life is regulated by customs which have probably varied only in minutiae

<sup>1</sup> I half suspect that the petroleum is imported for the sake of the square tin boxes in which it is packed. The whole domestic economy of Turkey seems to depend upon these tins. Piled one upon another and roofed with boards and sacking, they serve for slum dwellings in the towns. Cut up into plates they protect the sides of the better houses from the weather. They are used as water-cans and kitchen pots. Your food, your water, and even your bread, taste of petroleum, which becomes to the fastidious traveller a sensuous symbol of the East. Nothing could illustrate better the poverty and slovenliness of Oriental life.

since the first Slavs settled in Macedonia. Generation after generation the women sew their garments in the same pattern ; the potter kneads his clay at the wheel into the same graceful shapes, and the gipsy smith hammers out the same spades, the same bridles, the same pruning hooks and sickles. For feast days there is a crude red wine, and for daily use a white brandy (*raki*, *mastic*, or *ouso*), made from the skins and twigs of the grapes. Each Sunday the young folk gather round the same tree in the centre of the village and dance the same dreary and monotonous step in one long file to the same tuneless music of the flute, and the same unvarying rhythm of the drum. The calendar, with its endless feasts and holydays, its long fasts and its appointed abstinences, gives all the variety which the peasants crave. It is a simple life, laborious and limited, but not without its homely joys and its rude luxuries. It asks nothing from the outer world. It is untroubled by the march of artifice and progress. It might be happy in its simple materialism were it not for the incessant menace of violence and fraud.

The suffering that follows an insurrection occurs but seldom. Even the tax-gatherer makes infrequent visits. The Albanian raids have their periods and limits. The one element of disturbance which is constant and intolerable is that of the Moslem neighbour and the Moslem landlord. It is serious that out of its income of £25 the typical peasant family should be compelled to pay some £15 to landlord, tax-gatherer, and rural guard. But unfortunately when the relations between the peasant and his Turkish landlord have been set out in this precise fashion in black and white, only half the truth has been told. There are no written contracts, no leases, no custom which a court would enforce. If the landlord and the peasant were of the same race and the same creed, if they recognised a common moral law, and felt an ordinary human sympathy in their daily dealings, if there were a police to render violence dangerous and law courts to make chicanery risky, this vague relationship would still subject the peasant to an intolerable economic tyranny. He is a

tenant at will ; he works by the grace of his master ; there are no industrial towns to which he can carry his labour if he should be harshly treated. In point of fact, he is the servant of an alien conqueror, who barely recognises their common humanity.<sup>1</sup> There are no courts to which he can appeal, for he cannot afford to bribe ; and no Turkish judge would ever dare to decide in favour of a Christian peasant against a Moslem landlord. The village policeman (if the *bekchi* deserves that name) is the *bey's* retainer and nominee. The sole law which regulates these complicated and elastic relations is the big revolver which the landlord wears in his belt.

What in practice is this relation ? It must vary, of course, from village to village, but the ruling factor is always force. To begin with, few Moslem landlords possess title-deeds. They are simply "squatters," whose fathers have annexed their estates as a sequel to some local massacre. Many cases of the kind have happened within living memory. I visited one village (Treska), only two hours' ride from Uskub, which was a populous Christian community fifty years ago, where the peasants owned their own land. About the time when we were "putting our money on the wrong horse" in the Crimea, some enterprising Albanians swooped down on the place, massacred one-half of the population, settled in their cottages, and annexed the lands of the survivors. The men of the present generation hew wood and draw water for the son of the brigand of the fifties, who is now a notable magnate. He allows them one-half of the proceeds of their labour on the lands that were their fathers'. The peasants are serfs without leisure, security, or rights. There are, roughly, about eighty days in the year when no good Bulgarian will do much work in his fields—Sundays and the greater saints' days. The Bey of Treska has hit on the ingenious plan of

<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, exceptions. I have known three Albanian *bey's* of whom even their own Bulgarian peasants spoke well. One even housed and fed his peasants for some months after their village had been burned during the insurrection by the Turkish troops. I must add that this case was unique.



forcing his peasants to work for him in his private fields on every one of these eighty days. For this work he pays no wages in money or kind, and no share of the produce is allotted to the labourer. The village policeman is the *bey's* retainer. Half the population of the village is now Moslem. It is exempt from this *corvée*, and naturally it is ready to use its arms to keep its unarmed Christian neighbours in subjection. Before I left this village, where there is no Sunday in the daily round of fruitless toil, I came on a vivid little illustration of the manner of life which its inhabitants lead. An old man, sturdily built, but clothed in rags and with the air of the driven beast, which all these peasants wear until they are given a rifle and join an insurgent band, came up to me as I was leaving the place. Thinking that I might have some medical skill, he bared his arm and showed me a nasty wound that had begun to fester. And then, with two neighbours to corroborate his tale, he told me how he had come by it. He was working two days before in his field, when a Turk in the next field summoned him peremptorily to come and help him. The Bulgarian could not well leave what he was at for the moment, and offered to come in five minutes. The Turk, incensed at this display of independence, rushed at him and stabbed him with his knife. That morning the Bulgarian had started to tramp into Uskub to have the unhealthy wound dressed. The Turk had met him in the road, and driven him back. I offered to take him to town with me, but he dared not come—I could not guarantee him against the subsequent vengeance of his enemy. The man's story was undoubtedly true—when a Bulgarian peasant lies, he does not tell dull tales like this. Here, then, was a little specimen of the daily life of Treska. I do not suppose the *bey* and his retainers are often obliged to use their knives. The knowledge that they can do so whenever they choose, without risk of punishment, or vengeance, is probably enough to make their mastery respected. Once in a while it may be necessary to beat, or wound, or murder, and then the old round of trivial malice, petty robbery, and vulgar lust runs its smooth course once more. The consuls hear nothing of these little

village tragedies—the stolen sheepskin coat, the hamstrung ox, the shady tree cut down, the watercourse diverted, the wife insulted, and it may be violated while the husband is in the field. They go on unmarked from day to day, and it is only when one sits down at leisure in a peasant hut, and overcomes the shyness and suspicions of the owner, that one hears of them at all. They are neither interesting nor sensational, but it is this daily domestic oppression, much more than the startling and wholesale outrages, that has ground down the peasantry of Macedonia, crushed its spirit, its intelligence, its humanity, and made it what it is to-day—a maddened race of slaves, which is ready at length to commit any crime, to suffer any torture, if only it may be rid of the little tyrants of its fields, who eat its bread, consume its labour, and destroy its soul.

The Macedonian problem is desperate mainly because it has been overlaid with abstractions. We talk of "trouble in the Balkans," of insurgent excesses, and Turkish atrocities, without realising that these occasional and startling phenomena are the product of a misery that is as constant as it is uninteresting—and unbearable. We think of Turkish misrule as an isolated and irrational fact, without comprehending that it is a highly organised and quite intelligent system, designed to promote the profit of a small minority of officials, tax-farmers, and landlords. It rests on a substantial basis of corrupt and anti-social interest. The political mismanagement is the least of all the evils it produces. The reality behind the whole muddle of racial conflicts, beyond the Chauvinism of the Balkan peoples and the calculations of the greater Powers, is the unregarded figure of the Macedonian peasant, harried, exploited, enslaved, careless of national programmes, and anxious only for a day when he may keep his warm sheepskin coat upon his back, give his daughter in marriage without dishonour, and eat in peace the bread of his own unceasing labour. All our efforts might fail to bestow upon him an ideal government. But politics are, after all, a mere fraction of life. While Servia earns the contempt of the civilised world, the Servian peasant sows in hope and reaps in peace,

keeping for winter evenings the tale of murdered forbears, and ravished ancestors. While Bulgaria exiles her Prince, and her capital seethes with the disquieting warfare of parties, her peasantry is for ever bringing fresh fields beneath the plough, rid of the fears which used to paralyse its energy and enslave its spirit. The mere business of government, the struggles, the intrigues, the reforms which engage Parliaments and excite the press, count for little in the tranquil round of the villager's existence. It is the domestic tyranny of an alien dominion that affects him. To rid him of this daily obsession will be the real emancipation.

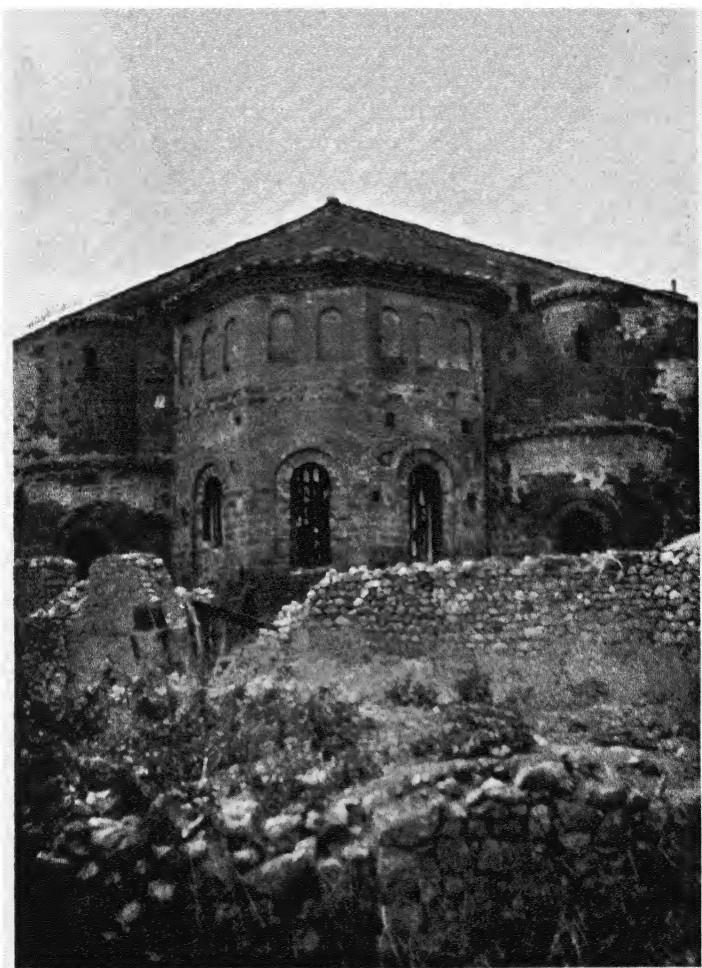
## CHAPTER III

### THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

THERE is at a mouth of a wild glen in Northern Macedonia a little village which shelters beneath its thatched roofs and dilapidated walls more misery and more tenacity than we could meet with anywhere in modern Europe. The peasants are mere serfs, who work on their master's land at their master's caprice for seven days in every week. They are not in the fortunate case of those Christian villagers who form within the limits of the hill or valley that is their daily world, a compact and kindly community of one faith and one race. The *bey's* house dominates their hovels. The *bey's* Moslem retainers, idle, well armed, and bred up in a predatory tradition, live among them and upon them. Their existence is a monotonous round of exploitation and servitude, broken and varied only by some wanton act of malice or of mischief, for which there is no possibility either of revenge or of redress. Talking with these villagers, I remember that the question came to my lips, "Why do you stay? Why do you not emigrate in a body? You have no lands to lose. The railway is barely ten miles away. You can almost see the Servian hills, and to Bulgaria is only three days' tramp. Why do you not go to a land where you might be both prosperous and free?" The answer gave me the clue to the deepest instinct in the Balkan peasant's nature. "Who," they said, "would care for the monastery, if we abandoned it? The Turks would seize it." And then they took me to visit the "monastery." It was only a little chapel with a few rude outbuildings. Once there had been a monk or two, but now a peasant

family was in charge, who farmed the poor lands that belonged to it in the rugged, sunless valley. It boasted no architectural beauty, no rich *eikons*, no curious carving. But its shell of undressed stone, daubed though it was with recent plaster, had echoed for centuries the prayers, the faith, and the misery of that abandoned hamlet. Its rude inscriptions in Slavonic lettering proved that it dated from before the Conquest. It was the one link with the past, and the village was ready to endure its daily humiliation, its incessant toil, its hopeless poverty, content to fulfil the simple duty of preserving those historic stones from ruin, and keeping alight the little flames that had blackened its altar-screen with the piety of the ages. This passion for the church represented the one ideal element in the life of the village, its sole care that went beyond food and raiment, and it was strong enough to outweigh all the allurements of freedom and of ease. The more one learned of the Macedonian peasants, the more one realised that the sentiment of this village was common to them all. Going about among the devastated villages of Monastir after the insurrection, I was always led first of all to inspect the burned or looted church. Its destruction affected the people far more profoundly than the loss of their homes. Village after village besought us to set aside for the reconstruction of the churches some part at least of the relief money which we were spending to meet sheer starvation. I am convinced that the average peasant would rather that we had rebuilt his church, even at the cost of surrendering some of the food and clothing which we actually gave him. There is scarcely a village so poor or so small as to have no church, even if the peasants themselves live in hovels of mud and subsist for some weeks before harvest on a diet of roots and herbs; while the wealthier villages of the south erect splendid, if tawdry, fanes which dominate the countryside.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The older churches in the East are indeed little more than shrines. They have little relation to population. You may find them in desert places, or, again, a town of perhaps 5,000 inhabitants will boast one hundred ancient chapels. They are not places of assembly or worship.



ANCIENT CHURCH OF ST. SOPHIA (OCHRIDA), NOW A DILAPIDATED  
MOSQUE



It is not so much the religious instincts of the Balkan peasant as his political conditions which explain his passionate attachment to his Church and the great part which it plays in his existence. His fidelity to his Church has been through five centuries one continuous martyrdom. He has remained true to it not merely from a reasoned or traditional faith in its tenets, but rather because apostasy involved a foreswearing of his nationality and a treason to the cause of his own race. It is the only free and communal life which the Turks permit him. It is essentially a national organisation. It reminds him of the greater past. It unites him to his fellow-Christians throughout the Empire, and in the free lands beyond the Empire. It is the one form of association and combination which is not treasonable. Its Bishops are the sole Christian aristocracy in Turkey, its synods and its local councils the only form of autonomy or representative self-government which the law allows. Any political organisation outside the Church must necessarily be a secret and proscribed society. Within the Church and the various activities, mainly scholastic, which grow up around a Church, a certain measure of freedom is possible. The result is that the Christians of Turkey have always preserved and still possess a certain unity and power

They are rather monuments to some saint. There is room to swing a censer and chant an Alleluia, but for a congregation no one thought of providing. Pictures (*eikons*) commemorate the dead saint, and perhaps a chest contains his relics. The little place, with its graceful structure and quaint domes of antique brick, fulfils a duty for the countryside by its mere existence, and doubtless counts for much in winning the favours of the glorified martyr or hermit. The modern churches, which are often large and spacious, are obviously built under the influence of a quite different conception of the Church's place in life. They have of course their altars and their *eikons*, but they are primarily "synagogues"—assembly-rooms. The village, under Turkish rule, has come to value its Church as the centre of its social and political existence. Here alone it is permissible for the commune to gather together. Here it is free from the eyes of the tyrant and the unbeliever. Meetings to discuss secular interests are sometimes held in the nave, and the Insurgent Committee will summon a village to church in order to choose the men who are to serve in its bands. But, despite these profane uses, the Church retains its sanctity. Sometimes, though rarely, it was used during the winter of 1903-4 as a refuge by houseless families, but my suggestions that it should be turned into a hospital during an epidemic excited horror—for a death would have meant desecration.



of common action. The Church has paid the inevitable penalty. She has been more or less secularised and her spiritual functions have suffered. Her mission has been patriotic rather than spiritual.

This transformation of the Orthodox Church into a national organisation was a consequence of the peculiar civilisation of its conquerors. The Turks were a military people with a theocratic organisation. Their law was a religious code; their army a force which conquered in the name of a faith. Of civil law and civil administration they had no conception, and these ideas have hardly taken root even in our own time. The law which they brought with them was the Koran, and it was no more possible to impose it upon Christians than it was to include them in the army. And accordingly there grew up a curious system of autonomy within the Empire which had no territorial or racial basis, but rested wholly on religion. The Turkish courts, which existed only for the interpretation of the Koran, had jurisdiction only over Moslems. Disputes among Christians were left to the Christian Church for settlement, and the heads of the Church were made responsible to the Ottoman officials for the good government of their flocks. Society was organised in Churches, to one or other of which every Ottoman subject must belong. These *Millets*, as they are called—Islam, the Greek Church (Roum), the Catholics, the Armenians, and the Jews—were the only subdivisions which the Turks recognised. The *Roum Millet* (Roum is a Turkish corruption of Romaïos, the Greek name for a subject of Byzantium) was all that remained of the Eastern Empire. Under Bishops and Patriarchs it carried on the life of the Byzantine court, and preserved the Greek nationality with the Greek form of Christianity. It was a name which confounded Serbs, Bulgars, and Greeks under one common designation which implied only a recognition of the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The system lasted everywhere in its entirety until well into the last century. There are still towns in Albania (*e.g.*, Ipek) where there are as yet no civil courts and the Koran is the only law. But although a code based on the Napoleonic

model now prevails in all but the wilder corners of Turkey, the old theocratic arrangement is by no means extinct. The law of marriage, divorce, and inheritance is still administered by the Bishops. It was, moreover, only the Sultan's Reform Scheme of 1902 which abolished the plan by which each of the religious communities of the chief towns elected a lay member to sit as judge in the various civil courts. For purposes of registration and for passports the old system of *Millets* is still in vogue, and Serbs, Vlachs, Orthodox Albanians, and Bulgarians, who have not joined the schismatic national Church, are still classified in the census under the comprehensive title *Roum*—a fact of which the Greeks, eager to make out a claim to Macedonia, are never slow to take advantage.

It is one of those odd anomalies against which one is for ever stumbling in Turkey, that the Bishops of the Orthodox Church enjoy, in name at least and by right, an authority and a rank which Churchmen in any Christian country rarely possess, unless by reason of their personal character. The old-fashioned Turk seldom brings himself to regard a Christian as anything better than an unclean and perverted animal. The official documents which confer authority upon Bishops and Patriarchs are based upon an ancient model which denounces all Christianity as a corrupt invention of the Evil One. The Sultan may order a systematic massacre of the Bishop's flock, to be carried out under the control of his officers at the signal of trumpets sounded from minarets. But none the less the Bishop is a high officer of state. He may rank in the official hierarchy above the civil and military governors of the town in which he resides. He may, if he chooses, claim the authority, the precedence, and the dignity which that rank confers. He has a place in the advisory council of his district. It happened that the Caimakam (prefect) of Castoria was dismissed in the autumn of 1903 because he had fallen too palpably and too publicly under the influence of the Greek Archbishop. It was a useless precaution. The next Caimakam, being a person of no particular character and of very limited intelligence, fell promptly

under the same ascendancy. A clever ecclesiastic, if he has a quick wit and a deep purse, and above all if he has the courage to use his position, may come to exercise a very real influence upon the administration. The Caimakams, and even the Valis (Governors), rarely keep their posts for very long and seldom acquire much local influence. They come to look upon the bribes which the Bishops pay them as among their most secure and reliable sources of income, with the result that a knowledge of Turkish is more valued in a Bishop than a deep acquaintance with New Testament Greek. It is of little moment that he should be a theologian, but highly important that he should be a man of the world. And yet among the nine Macedonian Bishops I have known, not more than three used their power to much effect. The Bishops, though chosen exclusively from the celibate clergy who have had a long professional training, often find it hard to forget their peasant origin; and the dread of the ruling race that is ingrained in every Macedonian villager is apt to cling to them through life. In any event the powers of the local Turkish officials are so limited under modern conditions that the influence of the Bishops can only be brought to bear upon trivial and parochial details. And if the Bishop has some power, he also bears a very grievous responsibility. If the Turks happen to be in the state of mind when they wish that the people had only one head that they might cut it off, the Bishop offers a very tempting substitute. Of late years the influence of Russia has strengthened the position of the Bishops. The classical instance of this tendency to make the Bishops responsible for the sins of their flock is the case of the Greek Patriarch who was hanged during the War of Independence. The recent annals of Armenia would supply other parallels. This sort of thing naturally tends to make the average Bishop, who ought to be a sort of tribune of a people, a shift and timid representative of official religion who serves two masters with an anxious neck.

But among his own people it would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of the Bishop. In the common speech of the Greeks he is known as the Despôtes. He

represents among them at once the civil and the religious power, and he is the nearest approach that they possess to a native aristocracy. He is their sole mediator with the Turks—unless there are European consuls at hand. He guides all the machinery of the Church, including its truncated civil functions (marriage, inheritance, divorce). He controls the schools, and, if such a thing exists, the hospital of the community. He is, by peasant standards, fabulously wealthy. He maintains a certain state, and usually inhabits a great house on a commanding site. His advice is sought on large issues and on small. He keeps his distance, bears himself as a rule with a dignity which is partly aristocratic and partly sacerdotal. Etiquette surrounds him with reverent phrases of Byzantine origin, and usage prescribes that the faithful who enter his presence shall bow profoundly, kiss his hand, and seat themselves at some distance from his chair. But he is part of an old order which is rapidly disappearing before Western influence. Among the older generation of Bishops, while a certain practical wisdom and knowledge of the world is no rare quality, education in any European sense of the word is rare. There are, however, two Macedonian Bishops, both Greeks, who have studied abroad, one in Oxford and one in Leipzig, but their knowledge of English and German only throw into deeper relief their incorrigibly Byzantine habits of thought. Many of the higher Bulgarian clergy have studied in Russia, but only in the clerical seminaries, from which, I imagine, modern and Western ideas are very jealously excluded. They lead for the most part a sedentary life, rarely venturing beyond their palaces or coming into touch with the daily life of the peasantry. Their pre-occupation is the incessant round of intrigue and violence by which each Church in Macedonia retains its place against its rivals. Their trade is intolerance and their business propaganda, and it leaves them little leisure to concern themselves with the spiritual or material welfare of their flocks. Against some, rumour tells tales of avarice and corruption, notably in the sale of divorces. Others are celibates only in their vows. The most favourable type

among them whom I have known was the Bulgarian Metropolitan Gregorius of Monastir, a gentle old man with no taste less innocent than the culture of flowers. In his early manhood he organised an ambulance during the Russo-Turkish War, and, despite all the opposition of Turks and Greeks, he spent some weeks of the winter which followed the insurrection in going about among the devastated villages to relieve their distress.

The importance of the Bishops is destined to disappear with Turkish authority and the theocratic tradition which it acclimatised in Eastern Europe. Already the Bulgarian Committee represents a movement of democratic revolt against these princes of the Church. It is a movement led by young and half-Westernised men who find themselves nearly as much out of sympathy with Byzantinism as with Turkish rule.

It is not an easy task for a foreigner to attempt to form an estimate of the worth and character of religion as it is represented by the Orthodox Church in Macedonia. One glaring and quite objective fact, however, seems to promise a fairly sure inference. Nothing could be more remarkable than the total absence of heresy among the Christians of Turkey and the Balkan States. The active speculation of the Greek mind and its preoccupation with religion produced an endless succession of more or less interesting heresies even during the Middle Ages. With the Turkish conquest they abruptly ceased. A Patriarch who had been educated in Germany played a little with Protestantism in the seventeenth century. I believe there is no other instance of any deviation from the monotonous path of official orthodoxy. There has been schism, it is true, but always on political and never on theological grounds. The explanation lies, I am afraid, on the surface. There is no heresy in the Eastern Church because there is no real interest in religion. Turkish rule has crushed every form of intellectual life, and in the feud of conqueror and conquered, Christianity has become no more than a sort of mental uniform in which one party has marched in a long and doubtful defensive warfare. The conquest did, in

fact, destroy a peculiarly interesting heresy<sup>1</sup> which flourished under the name of Bogomilism among the Slavs of Macedonia and Bosnia and also in Albania. It seems to have been Unitarian in its theology, Manichean in its metaphysics, and so stubbornly idealist, so certain that all matter and therefore all external forms are evil, that it rejected the sacraments. The little one knows of it suggests an affinity with some of the most spiritual of the Russian peasant heresies. But the modern Balkan peasant has neither the leisure nor the ease of mind to approach religion with any fresh and original insight. And here the Christianity of the Eastern Church compares unfavourably with Islam, which proves its vitality by not a little unorthodox speculation. There is no movement of thought among the Christians which can compare in interest with the Bektashi heresy, with its secret revolt against Mahomet, its mystical tendencies, and its preaching of tolerance and brotherhood (see pp. 246, 247).

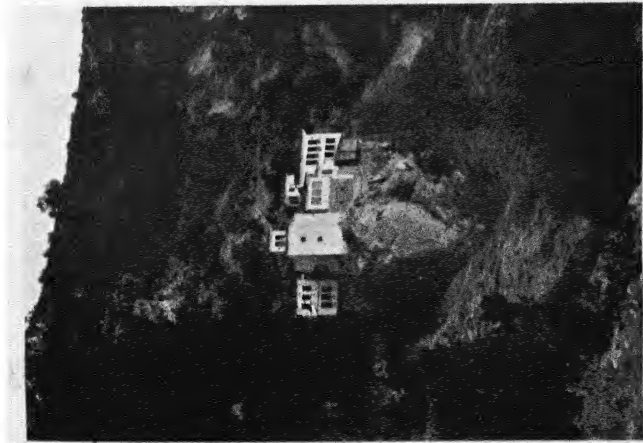
Indeed the Cross in the East has become so much a mere symbol of warfare that it is a little difficult to define Orthodox Christianity in any but negative terms. I doubt if it has any important bearing on conduct, and certainly in its traditions there is no longer a trace of that humanitarian spirit of mercy and love which the modern mind tends more and more to read into its religion. The Moslem at least has a theory that he may atone for many sins by giving bread to the pariah dogs of the streets.<sup>2</sup> There is no such sentiment as this among the Christians, and as little recognition of any duty to the poor and the sick. I shall not easily forget the impression made upon me during a visit to Koritza, a wealthy and progressive town with a powerful

<sup>1</sup> It was connected with the Paulician heresy in Armenia and also with the later movements among the Albigenses and the Bohemians.

<sup>2</sup> I suppose there are few men in history of whose cruelty chroniclers will speak more harshly than Sultan Abdul Hamid. And yet this man was recently at pains to give an order forbidding the European Tramway Company in Constantinople to lay salt on its lines during winter, lest the mixture of salt and snow should cause pain to the feet of the dogs of the street. Which, to some just and eternal intelligence, would be the more guilty—the ignorant and superstitious despot who massacres disloyal subjects from fear, or the “enlightened” man of the world who causes pain to dumb animals for gain?

Orthodox community which lavishes money on large schools, and a pretentious cathedral, when the Greek Bishop begged me to assign a pound from the British Relief Fund to assist a single family of refugees which was starving within a stone's throw of the episcopal palace.<sup>1</sup> Both at Ochrida and Castoria we made several vain attempts to induce the Bulgarian clergy to visit the sick and the wounded in our hospitals, to bring them some spiritual consolation, to read aloud to them, perhaps, and at all events to cheer them with a kindly human word. But evidently ministrations of this sort do not enter into the Eastern ideal of Christianity. The only concern which the clergy displayed in our patients was a very keen anxiety lest we should encourage these miserable creatures, in need of every attention and nourishment, to break the terribly severe fasts which the Church imposes for thirty days before Christmas as well as during Lent. I can only recollect one piece of evidence to show that the Church interests herself at all in conduct—the frequent presence in the churches of crude symbolical pictures in which the awful fate of various sorts of sinners is depicted, and a choice assortment of the wicked, including even Bishops and Pashas, are enduring appropriate but always lurid tortures. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the confessional, which is still nominally an institution of the Eastern Church, has fallen into almost total disuse. That seems to imply a growing indifference to conduct, but it is also, no doubt, a natural consequence of the ignorance and degra-

<sup>1</sup> Nothing could illustrate more dismally the essential barbarism of the Greek Church than the abominable cruelty practised in the monasteries upon lunatics. There are no other asylums in Turkey, and the method of cure consists in imprisoning the sufferer in an underground dungeon, where he is more or less starved, sometimes deprived of water, and often beaten unmercifully to expel the evil spirit. I knew one case where these tortures were exercised upon an old priest, who was suffering from nothing more serious than the failing of mental power, which not infrequently follows a severe attack of influenza. It would be well if the excellent Anglican Churchmen who are trying to promote a union with the Eastern Church would use their influence to reform such abuses as these, instead of perpetuating, by their ludicrous flatteries, the complacency which explains them. The Turks are not the only authors of Eastern atrocities.



BULGARIAN MONASTERY NEAR OCHRIDA



MONASTERY OF SVETI NAOUM, LAKE OCHRIDA





dition of the secular clergy. To go for ethical guidance to the average village priest would indeed be too ridiculous. The married priests outside the larger towns are for the most part almost totally uneducated, and lead the life of peasants, only adding the fees paid by their flock for marriages, baptisms, and funerals to the revenues of their fields. They can read enough to mumble through the ritual, and write sufficiently well to keep the parish registers; but there their superiority to the average peasant ends. Preaching is practically unknown. Their function is not that of the pastor or the teacher. They are simply petty officials who perform the rites appropriate to the crossing of the frontier between this world and the next. They bury and baptize for a consideration, much in the spirit of a customs' officer who takes toll on the border of him who enters and him who leaves. The priest is none the less usually among the leaders of his village. As the representative of the Bishop, and one of the "notables" whom the Turkish authorities may call to account, he exercises considerable power. We had often occasion to appeal to the priest of a devastated village to compile a list of the more destitute families. The result was rarely satisfactory. Either he made a shameless catalogue of his own relatives and friends, or else, fearing to offend any of his flock, he wrote down all alike. The best priests were, as a rule, the men who had been elected by their village as insurgent chiefs because of some natural gift of leadership.

And yet I should convey a totally false impression if anything in this chapter were to suggest that the Macedonian peasant is deficient in the religious sense. He has it profoundly in some way not very easy to define. He fasts with scrupulous exactitude for no less than two hundred days of the year, and an Orthodox fast, involving, as it does, abstinence not merely from meat, but also from fish, milk, and eggs, is a terribly severe ordeal. In towns, and perhaps in the richer villages, it is not observed in all its rigour, but at least the women of the poor upland villages would rather perish than break it. Ceremonies play a great part in Macedonian life, and yet I can conceive no

people more scandalously irreverent. Certain rites, like the blessing of the waters on the feast of John the Baptist, when the Bishop casts a cross into the nearest lake or river, for which the young men dive, are frankly pagan and delightfully picturesque. But only an antiquarian could find an excuse for the ceremonial of baptism or marriage. The friends of the infant or of the young couple laugh and talk during the quaint proceedings, and I have heard a Bulgarian priest convulse the church with a witticism emitted during the intervals when he was mumbling incantations and smearing the purple body of the hapless baby with the due number of crosses in oil. But, indeed, there is some excuse for the peasants. Worship is conducted entirely in a dead language, incomprehensible to all but the educated. It is intelligible that the Greeks should cling to the ancient tongue, but when one finds that the new Bulgarian Church revived the old Slavonic of Saints Cyril and Methodius instead of creating a ritual in modern Bulgarian, one suspects that obscurity and remoteness must be essential desiderata of the Oriental religious consciousness. What remains after all these negations is, I think, this : that the Macedonian peasant has a haunting sense of the constant presence of God and the saints. His daily language is moulded by it, and recurring sentences contain the name of God. In Turkish the first word that one learns is *yavash* (slowly) ; in Bulgarian it is *Gospod* (God). Announce that you have come to confer some benefit, the invariable response is, "God has sent you." Ask a village what it will do when the dole you have been providing ceases, and it will answer, "God will see to it." Mention that some one is ill, and you are assailed with a "God will save her."<sup>1</sup> The God behind these phrases is, I suspect, simply the

<sup>1</sup> This particular phase of religious feeling results in a complete neglect of all sanitary and medical precautions, particularly where children are concerned. One Bulgarian prelate seemed always to entertain a lurking distrust of our hospital as an impious interference with Providence. "If God means them to get better they will get better ; if He doesn't they won't." This typical ecclesiastic often resembled Ibsen's Pastor Manders, who held that insurance against fire implied a defiance of Providence.

characterless natural force of Eastern Fatalism, endowed with no very definable moral attributes, and entering into no very noteworthy or intimate relation with the human spirit. But the belief in His presence, and in a glorious legion of saints, sometimes visible and always active, and not very clearly distinguished from the traditional Slavonic fairies, is completely sincere, and as yet untouched by Western influences. It is said that in some villages the Bulgarian peasants were only induced to join the insurrection when a phonograph smuggled into church on the fatal Sabbath declared in uncanny tones that it was the voice of Christ who commanded all His followers to rise against the Turks, and assured them of victory. I cannot vouch for the truth of this tale, but if it be an invention it is an apt enough satire on the Christianity of the Balkans.

There is one common illusion regarding the Churches of the Balkans which Mr. Balfour has done much to popularise. He has written and spoken as though the rifts and feuds among Eastern Christians were the result of their religious differences. That is an exact inversion of the facts. It is true that the old feud between Greeks and Latins still survives, but even this had its origin not in the theological differences, which were more than once composed, but rather in the bitter memories of the Crusades, when the Christian chivalry of the West turned aside from the road that led to the Holy Sepulchre, to sack Constantinople and destroy the Eastern Empire. But there are virtually no Catholics in European Turkey outside Albania and the Levantine sea-ports. The battle of the Churches is simply a political or more properly a racial conflict, which assumed an ecclesiastical colour only because of the curious theocratic conditions which prevail in Turkey. There is between the Greek and Bulgarian Churches no shadow of difference either in doctrine, ritual, or constitution. The only difference between them is that the "Greeks" acknowledge the authority of the Greek Patriarch and are inscribed in the "*Roum*" *Millet*, while the Bulgarians reject his

supremacy, obey the Bulgarian Exarch, use the Slavonic language in their services, and are enrolled in the Bulgarian *Millet*. Persecution there is in plenty, but it cannot properly be called religious persecution. Villages are "converted" by force, by threats, or by persuasion from one "Church" to another, but the process means no more than a transference of allegiance from one political propaganda to its rival. The whole Bulgarian schism has of course been excommunicated by the Greek Patriarch, but the absurdity of this use of spiritual weapons in carnal warfare is so patent that "Greeks" and "Schismatics" frequently share the same church, and say Mass on alternate Sundays in Greek and Slavonic from the same altar.<sup>1</sup>

One can understand this singular feud only by remembering that Turkish institutions render impossible the formation of any kind of party or combination except on an ecclesiastical basis. A group of men who may wish to create any nationalist or political association in Turkey must choose between the alternatives of founding either a Church or else a secret society. When the Bulgarians wished to emphasise the fact that they were a race separate from the Greeks, the only possible procedure was to make a schismatic Church which should give them a right to claim recognition as a new *Millet*; for the Greeks refused to recognise their language or to appoint Bulgarian Bishops. The success of the Bulgarian propaganda owes more to the adoption of this drastic and uncompromising course than to anything else. The Servians have never ventured to throw off the authority of the Œcumenical Patriarch, and though after an incredible expenditure of backsheesh and much diplomatic intrigue they succeeded, in 1897, in procuring the nomination of a Serb as Archbishop of Uskub, they are still confounded with Greeks, Vlachs, and Orthodox Albanians in the "Roum" *Millet*. The Vlachs are in a still more anomalous position. They have no Church and no hierarchy of their own, yet the few priests who dare to say

<sup>1</sup> Tournefort, the botanist whom Louis XIV. sent on a long cruise in the Levant, reports that even Greeks and Latins shared the same churches in the islands of the Archipelago.

Mass in Roumanian are promptly excommunicated by the Greek Bishops.

But perhaps the most curious and instructive ecclesiastical development in the Balkans is the organisation known as the Catholic Uniate Church. Nothing bears witness so triumphantly to the hold which "Orthodoxy" has on the East. The Uniate Church is an invention which played its part in Louis Napoleon's efforts to consolidate French influence in the Near East (1857-1861). In ritual, constitution, and even in dogma, it is practically indistinguishable from the Orthodox Church. But just as the Bulgarian Church is an Orthodox Church which recognises not the Patriarch but a Primate of its own, known as the Exarch, so the Uniate Church is an Orthodox Church which recognises the Pope. The clergy marry, wear the garb of the Eastern priest, say Mass in Bulgarian, and in every external follow the Eastern rite. There seemed no other way of creating nominal Catholics who would be under French protection. The movement had some temporary success among the Bulgarians, but it defeated its own ends by frightening Russia into the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate,<sup>1</sup> and when that happened its adherents deserted *en masse*. The Uniate Patriarch was kidnapped, and the Church has practically no following in Macedonia to-day except in the district of Kilkish, where its admirable orphanages are situated. The implied admission that nothing in Catholicism is essential save the authority of the Pope seems curiously cynical. But the policy of making converts by a wholesale political method justifies itself in the second generation. The priests are educated and transformed: worship is rendered reverent, and the children are trained up in a conception of religion which has nothing at all in common with that of the genuine Eastern Church. But the day of political Churches is rapidly passing even in Macedonia. During the winter of 1903-4, Sarafop, disgusted by

<sup>1</sup> This was in 1870, in the days when Pan Slavism was a force in Russia and General Ignatieff ruled Constantinople. Russia naturally feared that if the southern Slavs became Catholics she would lose her ascendancy over them.

the failure of Orthodox Russia to support the revolution, gave the word of order that, with the object of winning the sympathy of the Western Powers, the Bulgarians should enrol themselves either in the Roman or the Protestant communion.\* There was practically no response.

But the real religion of the Balkans is something more deeply-rooted than all this fantastic confusion of political Churches and racial feuds. It is older and more elemental than Christianity itself; more permanent even than the Byzantine rite. It bridges the intervening centuries and links in pious succession the modern peasant to his heathen

\* It may not be irrelevant to add here a note on the failure of Protestant missions in the Balkans. The real root of this failure is doubtless the simple fact that the Macedonian expects that his Church should have a definitely national and political character. A purely spiritual propaganda is beyond his comprehension. He never quite abandons the conviction that the American missionaries must be working in the interests of England or America (he hardly distinguishes between them). When he discovers that conversion carries with it no claim to consular protection he feels cheated and disillusioned. A Church on these lines has, in his view, no bait which should tempt him into a national apostasy. Native Protestants, moreover, have to endure not a little social persecution, despite the fact that the missionaries themselves are universally and deservedly respected. One of them who has just left Monastir was indeed informally canonised by local opinion. And yet in thirty years he hardly made as many converts. Evangelical Protestantism, as the older generation of missionaries interpret it, seems—it is merely a personal opinion—a somewhat harsh and sterile creed. To the natives it appears mainly as a series of negations—so many prohibitions of wine, tobacco, *eikon*-worship, and Sunday travelling. Negations will never attract. Another serious drawback is the use of the English language in the American schools, not merely as an acquirement, but as a vehicle of instruction. French is the language which the educated Macedonian wishes to learn, and English is comparatively useless. Better results should be achieved by the industrial and agricultural school which the Rev. E. Haskell has started near Salonica. It seems a pity that the Protestant missionaries ever founded a rival Church at all. Had they cared to take orders in the Orthodox Church, or even to confine themselves to educational work, they might have promoted a reformation from within. Undoubtedly they have done great good, particularly in Bulgaria and in Armenia. Their colleges and secondary schools were so largely frequented by native Christian lads that the Eastern Churches were compelled in self-defence to imitate them. Mere rivalry did much to hasten the educational development of all the Christian races. At least the American schools sowed discontent and aspiration. If they have not made Protestants they have made relatively well-educated men, who found the stagnation and oppression of the Turkish East completely unendurable.

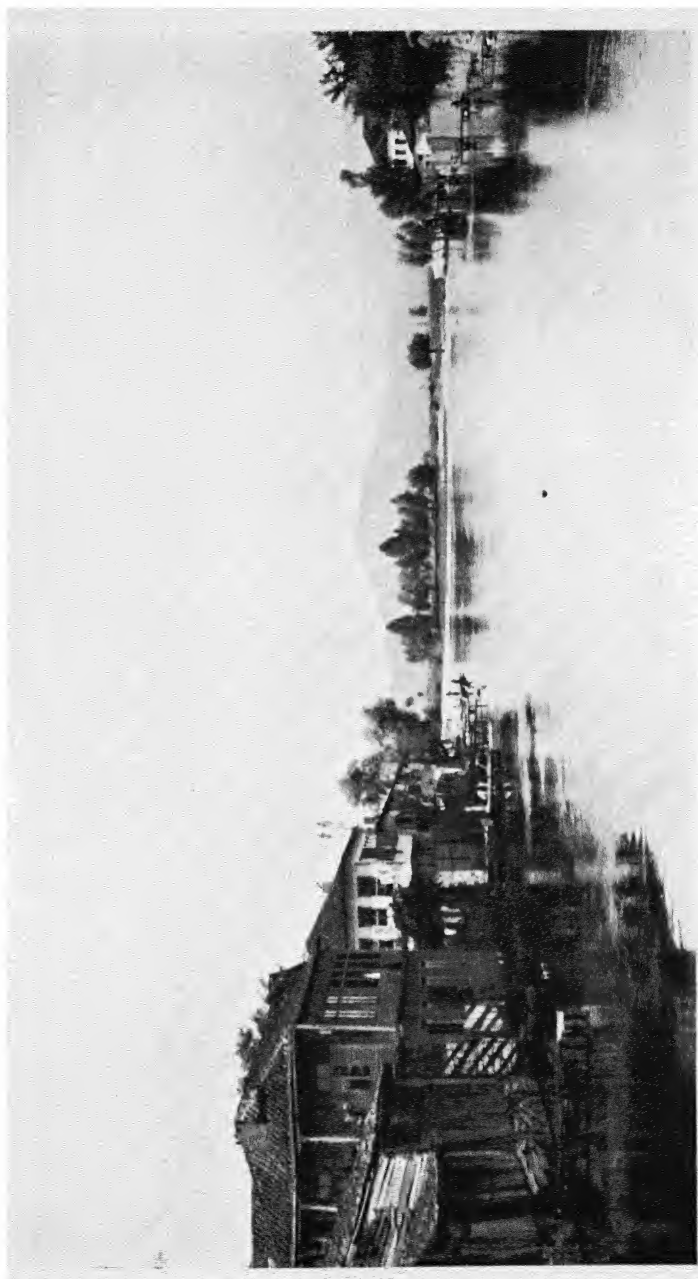
ancestor, who wore the same costumes and led the same life in the same fields. It is based on a primitive sorrow before the amazing fact of death, which no mystery of the Resurrection has ever softened. It is neither a rite nor a creed, but only that yearning love of the living for the dead which is deeper than any creed. The most poignant expression of Eastern religion for me is a Macedonian churchyard on All Souls' Day. Under an irrelevant cross stand crowds of women wailing for the dead, some with a conventional, an annual grief that strikes no note of sincerity, others with a bitter anguish that seems to mock the consolations of religion. One by one they place their offerings on the tombstones—the same gifts of wine and corn that nourished the shade of an Homeric hero. It is true that the priest comes round to bless them, but one feels that he is a spiritual parvenu dragged by a force beyond himself into a prehistoric ritual which survives in the heart of the Balkan peasants, a Paganism more native, more congenial, more deeply-rooted than the Orthodox Church itself.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE RACES OF MACEDONIA

**I**F its towns were typical of Macedonia it would indeed be a land of insoluble riddles and inextricable confusions. They have no character save an infinite charity for the obsolete of all ages, a tolerance which rejects no innovation and shrinks from no anachronism. One seems in such a place as Ochrida to move in a long pageant of strange and beautiful things which has no more reality than some symbolical procession. The straggling town is built on the shores of a great lake, and the white mountains that enclose it shut out the modern world and banish civilisation. The fishermen put out upon it in prehistoric boats, great punts with platform-poops, balanced by rudely-chiselled logs nailed on to their timbers at haphazard, and propelled by oarsmen who insist on rowing entirely from one side, while an old man or a boy stationed in the stern works hard to prevent them from revolving in a circle. The peasants come and go under crumbling mediæval gateways in costumes which can hardly have varied since the first Slavs invaded the Balkans. The men are in rough coats of sheepskin with the wool turned inwards. They walk slowly over the cobbled stones, turning their gnarled and weather-beaten faces to the ground, half from a habit of weariness and dejection, half in the effort to avoid stumbling over the dogs which sleep in the hollows of the pavement. At their heels, silent and docile, trudge their women, laden with market produce or bending under bundles of firewood, a slight race which ages prematurely and clothes itself, with a pathetic suggestion of childhood, in a simple overall



OCHRIDA FROM THE LAKE



which barely covers the ankles. Each village has its fashion of embroidering the graceful garment, and from the red needlework or the black you may learn all you need know of the wearer. She comes from this hamlet or the other. She has dressed herself as her mothers dressed themselves for generations, and her loyalty to tradition proclaims that she has never asked for novelty or innovation, nor rebelled against the conventions and the monotonies of her lot. As she goes, other types succeed, each as simply conservative, as careful of its past—it may be a Spanish Jew with his long grey beard and his gabardine, or a tall Albanian posturing in his white kilt with an air of defiant idleness and conscious strength. One refuses to take them for men of to-day. One walks among them as one walks along avenues of gods and mummies in some great museum. They belong to the same age as the mediæval fortress which crowns the hill or the graceful chapel which perpetuates the memory of Byzantium. The centuries jostle in a contemporary crowd, and the dead past is your daily neighbour. Nor is it otherwise in half-modernised towns like Monastir, which a railway connects with the levelling sea and the markets and manufactories of Europe. The Greeks go about in garments that ape the fashions of London and Paris. The Turkish officials love to array themselves in frock-coats of shabby black and nondescript cut. But even the consuls walk abroad with a kilted Albanian at their heels, and ere the town begins you must make your way through the gipsy colony, where lithe brown men do smithwork in cabins which resemble cobwebs rather than structures, and laughing women stand at the doors in semi-nakedness, showing their white teeth and their wild eyes that defy convention and ridicule fear. Civilisation is only one incongruous element the more in all this welter of variety. You will note only one common feature in these crowds of hostile races. The men, unless they are happy enough to be citizens of some European State, or poor enough to have no fear of their masters, are all covered with the red fez which has come to signify, no one quite knows how, loyalty to the Sultan and acceptance of his rule. No head-

gear with a meaning can ever have covered so much hypocrisy and so much treason, so many internecine feuds, and such contradictory plots of revolt and repression.<sup>†</sup>

There is something in the physical town which answers to this moral confusion. Under a brilliant sky and in regions where some constructive race has preceded the Turks, one meets with something more than the attraction of the bizarre. Crete, with its memorials of Venetian architecture, has a beauty to show which one encounters nowhere in Macedonia. But there is none the less a charm in these houses of all periods, sinking into a kindly decay in supreme unconsciousness of their picturesqueness. There is nowhere a hint of pretension, nor a suggestion that a man will be judged by the spruceness of the house he inhabits. Woodwork is left unpainted to rot at the good will of the merciful climate. There is a tolerance of dirt which amounts almost to a cynic's contempt for the decencies of life. The Apostate Julian revelling in the tangles of his beard, would have found something congenial in the disregard for cleanliness which reigns even in the houses of the great. Pashas do their Imperial business in palaces of crumbling lath and plaster, and *beys* sweep with great gestures along corridors that quake beneath their tread. Nothing is finished, nothing is repaired. It is as though the ruling race were a tenant conscious that his lease has long since run out. He is camping in his decaying tenements, waiting for Time to serve upon him the inevitable notice of eviction. Time dallies, but he cannot feel the place his own. He lives comfortably, nomad that he is. But he is satisfied to compromise with decay and make a composition with the years. The thought of the future does not disturb him.

<sup>†</sup> The fez is really in its origin a Greek headgear, but it is now an indispensable evidence of loyalty. To discard it is a proof of treasonable designs. I knew of a case in which two peasants newly returned from Austria masqueraded last winter in hats in the little town of Struga. They were promptly thrown into prison. A drunken sentry once levelled his rifle at me as I was entering the courtyard of the prefecture at Doiran. He explained afterwards that since I wore no fez I could not be a friend of the Sultan. The Albanians, however wear a white skull-cap, which is also tolerated.





MOSQUE AT MONASTIR



He knows nothing of his successors. He feels no obligation to exercise husbandry in an estate which is by right another's. And so his towns acquire an indescribable air of effortless ease. Here men have abandoned the weary effort to plane and level. There are no straight lines. There are no obtrusive uprights. Nature and gravity have their way unresisted, and it is a way of pleasant curves and good-natured slants. Where the process has not gone too far the effect is restful and various, as, for example, in Monastir, which is a comparatively new town. But in Ochrida one could long for a wave of mere material prosperity and a generation of busy and resolute spirits. There is no more melancholy city in Europe. The great lines of its fortress and its walls tell of a glorious past. But the modern town is a place of ruins peopled by orphans. Every second house is an untenanted skeleton of crumbling beams. Every second family has a widow for its head. It is only in some of the sterner Albanian towns that one encounters solid architecture. There the houses are of stone. It is rarely that a window looks on the street, and when a narrow aperture does appear in an upper storey one looks anxiously towards it, half expecting a rifle to emerge through this menacing slit. But here too, as in all Moslem towns, there is one triumph of intentional grace. The white-washed mosques send their slender minarets, with their sure lines, their confident assertion, above the daily welter of sullenness and decay, and tall poplars in their courtyard soften what might be harsh in the contrast. The quavers of the Muezzin's falsetto set the effect to music, and while he chants, the Turkish squalor is transformed to an Arabian elegance. It is the one effort of construction in all the round of the Turk's activity. He raises no cities; he erects no palaces. He has neither art nor science, nor political life. His typical activity is destruction and devastation. But a mosque he does build, and the drums that sound their single monotonous note through the wild nights of his Holy Month seem to satisfy his need for the positive with their reiterated declaration that *Allah is*.



One is compelled to write of "Turks" in dealing with Macedonia, but really the term has no ethnological meaning—as little as that other term, "Greeks." The first step, indeed, towards understanding the Macedonian question is to realise that roughly in Macedonia proper—the Macedonia which revolts, which claims to be a unity and asks for autonomy—there are neither Greeks nor Turks. For this Macedonia is an agricultural country whose sole industry is the tilling of the soil ; and its productive population is grouped in villages. The townsmen are parasites and middlemen. Among this class one may encounter true Turks. They are the official caste, from the Pashas and the military staff down to the petty employees of post-office and the customs. The more important among them are clerks who have served their apprenticeship to the Hamidian bureaucracy by cumbering the offices of one or other of the Ministries in Constantinople. These men are often genuine Turks from Asia Minor, but a fair proportion are Circassians, some are Levantines of nondescript origin, and one may meet among them full-blooded Arabs or negroes. The sedentary Moslem population of some of the larger towns, notably of Uskub, is largely composed of refugees, mainly Slav by race, who have fled from the Northern States, Bosnia, Servia, and Bulgaria, at the time when they were reclaimed for freedom and incorporated once more in Europe. These men, known as Muhadjirs, are notoriously fanatical. They are sometimes the representatives of the worst Turkish traditions who found the idea of living under Western conditions intolerable, and emigrated of their own free will—a description which covers nearly all who came from Bosnia. More often, I am afraid, they are the victims of Christian intolerance and injustice, and these include a large colony of Albanians who were ruthlessly expelled from the southern districts of Servia after the Russo-Turkish War. In either case they have a grievance. They are landless peasants without remunerative employment ; and while some of them swell the class of officials, soldiers, and spies, the majority live in poverty and furnish the materials of a dangerous and angry mob which is always

ready to avenge its historical wrongs by massacre. Another considerable Moslem element in the towns is furnished by the Albanians who have emigrated from their barren Highlands in search of employment. Amongst these diverse Moslem elements, Slavs, Asiatics, and Albanians, there is no community of race. They speak their own languages in their homes, and Turkish is an acquired and secondary tongue. But all of them are Moslems, and all of them are "Turks" in a political sense—they belong to the dominant caste, they are the rulers and the soldiers, and they are bound together by a tie of interest, since they form the minority which exploits the subject native races and lives by the informal and various tribute of the Christian majority.

Two other races belong to the Turkish group though they neither amalgamate with it, nor entirely share its privileges—the gipsies and the Jews. The gipsies are fairly numerous. They occupy separate quarters in the outskirts of all the larger towns. Some are sedentary and follow their traditional trade of blacksmith. Others are grooms and wandering pedlars, and most of them are supposed to add to their legitimate incomes by skilful and judicious horse-thieving. Their colonies are indescribably curious in their squalor and decay, ranging from ruined houses which shake beneath the blows of sledge-hammers, to huts some five feet high, constructed of old petroleum tins eked out with remnants of felt and sacking. They live in public, and their poverty is elementary. But they have the same slight if muscular grace and the same gaiety and ease of mind as in happier and wealthier lands. Their religion is variable and opportunist. For the moment in Turkey they are nominal Moslems, but the Turks set small store by their orthodoxy, and realise that if in their wanderings they should cross the Servian or Bulgarian borders, they would straightway embrace Christianity, as the settled gipsies of these new countries now do. Still, their lax profession serves to range them on the side of the dominant race, and in a struggle they would doubtless join the Mohamedan mob of the towns. But they are an element which is

politically and economically negligible, and only their picturesqueness entitles them to mention. On St. George's Day, when they celebrate the coming of summer, and their girls and women, fearless and unveiled, don their brightest jackets and baggiest trousers of yellow, green, and pink, and foot it in procession, with songs and cymbals, to cut fresh boughs from some favoured grove, they add a rare grace and movement to a world of nightmares and panics which knows little of gaiety and much of care and fear.

The Jews of Macedonia are more numerous and important. They must always have formed a considerable element of the population, as we learn from St. Paul in the first and from Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century. But their chief strain to-day has been drawn from Spain. They are the descendants of the exiles driven out by Ferdinand and Isabella. These refugees must have been numerous enough to absorb the earlier settlements, for Spanish, oddly contorted and corrupted, is everywhere the language of the Macedonian Jews. Their outlook on life is completely Oriental. They have no reason in their history to love the Christians. Interest and sympathy alike dictate an alliance with the Turks. They have their reward in a degree of immunity from oppression and in a complete confidence which no Christian race ever enjoys even when it happens under the dictates of some temporary political exigency, to be cultivating an understanding with the Turks. To some extent the schools maintained by the *Alliance Israélite* are breaking down the complete isolation in which the Jews of Turkey have lived, while the active commercial intercourse between the Jewish firms of Salonica and their co-religionists of Budapest and Vienna is helping to give them a fresh orientation. But they remain stubbornly Turcophil. Their new European education, such as it is, brings them no nearer to the Christian races who draw their knowledge and their political ideals from the same Western sources, and they remain as isolated as they were when their whole culture was the lore of the Talmud. This attitude of the Turkish Jews has serious political consequences, since it goes far to influence the sympathies of the great news-

papers and press agencies of the West, which are owned and managed by Jews, and thus delays and distorts the working of European opinion.

There are Jewish colonies of long standing and some importance in Monastir and Castoria; and in most of the less poverty-stricken smaller towns they are largely represented. Indeed, their extension is only prevented by the hostility of the Christian merchants who dread their competition, and now usually adopt the precaution of fixing the market day on Saturday—a piece of sharp practice which has effectually prevented their settlement in several commercial centres of recent growth. It is in Salonica, however, that they attain their greatest glory and influence. Salonica is that rare thing in modern Europe, a city whose population is by majority Jewish. The Jews can hardly number less than 80,000. They monopolise the commerce, control the shipping, and eclipse the Greeks not only in business but in “society” as well. Their showy and hideous villas, designed in Rococo fashion to produce a maximum of display, give to Salonica’s suburb an air of quite European vulgarity. Within the town the middle classes throng the narrow lanes and the forbidding and mysterious courtyards with their projecting upper storeys and protruding eaves. They patrol the streets in their long gabardines, and their women retain their mediæval costume, garish and *décolletée*. They are conspicuous and at their ease. They dominate the town, managing Turks and overawing Christians. Commerce is not their only avocation. The lower classes have a monopoly of the harbour-work and provide the boatmen and the porters of the quay, who tolerate no competition from other races, and are a law to themselves in the streets—indeed, the Christians go in fear lest the sturdy Jewish porters should some day join the Turkish mob in a general massacre. This Jewish predominance makes Salonica unique among Levantine seaports, where it is usually the Greek element which impresses its character on the town.

Salonica has the moral squalor of Europe with the physical squalor of the East. Picturesque it may be with its beautiful Byzantine churches, its Roman triumphal arch,

and its castles and bastions which recall the brief empire of the Crusaders. But the main impression is one of ugliness and materialism. The place seems oddly isolated, and when caged within its walls it becomes a sort of puzzle by what magic one reached a place so different from the idyllic Macedonian valleys to the north, or the fairy gulf of Volo to the south. Olympus across the bay dwarfs and rebukes it, and makes it trivial. It is a town of contradictions where men buy by telegraph in the costumes of the ghetto, and turn the stately Castilian of the Middle Ages into a *patois* for nasty pleasures and petty gains. And yet there lingers in Salonica a strange relic of a great enthusiasm, the flotsam of a wave of idealism which has hardly its parallel in the history of Europe. Besides the 80,000 orthodox Jews of Salonica, there is a sect of renegades, known as the Dounmé, who number some 20,000 souls. They are equally distrusted by Turks and Jews, despite their nominal adherence to Islam. They live apart, and so dread any mixing of their blood with the Turks that they make a practice of betrothing their children before they are born to avoid the risk of an unwelcome proposal. They date from the Annus Mirabilis, when, as if in sympathy with the expectations of our own Anabaptists and Fifth Monarchy men, a Jewish Messiah arose in the Levant. Sabatai Sevi of Smyrna obtained a more than local fame. Every ghetto in Turkey accepted him, introduced his ritual into its synagogues, blazoned his initials on its walls, abandoned commerce, and gave itself over to penance and preparation. For a year honesty reigned in the Levant. In Europe broadsheets, which told how triumphant hosts of the elect were marching in his name to Palestine, spread the Messiah's fame through Germany, Poland, and Italy, and even from distant Amsterdam pilgrims flocked to Turkey to receive his blessing. Unhappily it was part of his programme to beard the Grand Turk in his palace and to lead him in chains at the feet of the "celestial lion" which was to carry him to Zion. Arriving in Constantinople, Sabatai was arrested and imprisoned. Still, all went well, since the local authorities who were coining money from the tribute which they levied

on the pilgrims who visited the Messiah's dungeon, hushed the scandal up. The catastrophe only came when a rival Messiah carried tales to court. There Sabatai was summoned and bidden to perform a miracle on the spot. This took the uncomfortable form of standing as a butt for the archers of the Imperial Guard. When Sabatai flinched he was offered the choice of impalement or conversion to Islam. He chose the latter, and such was his influence with the Jews that after this exposure and renunciation thousands of his adherents followed him in a voluntary acceptance of Islam. The Dounmé of Salonica are their descendants. Two centuries of expectation have not dimmed their hope or corroded their loyalty, and amid the rumours of massacre and revolution in the hurrying bazaars of modern Salonica, they still await the second coming of their renegade Messiah.

With luck, a traveller in Macedonia may hear six distinct languages and four allied dialects spoken in the same market-place. If it is a northern centre, for example Uskub, the peasant women who handle the raw wool and hawk their own homespun, may use two Slavonic dialects, which vary slightly but still appreciably. The women who come from the hilly country to the north are clad in white dresses embroidered in black and green in the most decorative ancient designs. The Slav they speak shows Servian influence. Mingling with them are the women from the villages of the plain, whose taste is usually for red embroidery, and their Slav speech, if it must be classed, tends rather to Bulgarian than to Servian. The merchants in the booths belong to three races. There are some Greeks, but they probably are immigrants from Salonica and the South, who came with the railway. Jostling with them are the Jews, who also came from Salonica and speak their Spanish jargon. More numerous are the Vlachs or Wallachians, descendants of Roman colonists, perhaps the oldest townsmen in the place, and they speak indifferently their own Latin (Roumanian) dialect, or the Slav of the peasants with whom they have done business for centuries, or the culture-

language of the Greeks which has come to them through their schools and their Churches. They are excellent men of business ; they hold their own against Greeks and Jews ; and unlike them they contrive as a rule to live on neighbourly terms with the Slavs. They are fairly numerous in Macedonia (perhaps 200,000 souls, or nearly a tenth of the population), but scattered as they are in isolated mountain villages or in town communities, they make no territorial claims and act in politics as a makeweight, for whose alliance Slavs and Greeks eagerly compete. To complete the picture, there will be crowds of Northern Albanians (Ghegs), who have come to sell their cattle, a few Southern Albanians (Tosks) in white kilts, speaking a distinct dialect of their own, who may be acting as *cavasses* to officials or merchants or Europeans. Scattered about you may notice a few gipsy horse-dealers whose native speech is Romany, and a number of soldiers, spies, and officials, who understand nothing but Turkish. In short, one may distinguish in the Babel two Slav and two Albanian dialects, Vlach, Greek, Turkish, Hebrew-Spanish, and Romany. But on analysis only Albanian, Slav and Vlach can claim to be genuine Macedonian languages, if one understands by the vague term "Macedonia" the region which conspires and revolts and claims its independence from Europe. There is no *lingua franca*. Hard necessity imposes some knowledge of elementary Turkish upon the majority of the male population, but they rarely speak it with ease ; the peasants seldom understand more than a few words of it, and it has never become a medium of intercourse between different Christian races. Greek is more serviceable as a polite or commercial language, but its day is over, and save in the south, it is only the older generation of the Slavs which can speak it. French is now taking its place. Slav (and particularly the Bulgarian dialect) is the one language with which no native of the northern and central districts can dispense.

The towns, however, do not reproduce the real distribution of population in Macedonia. Roughly speaking, Turks, Greeks, Jews, and Gipsies are found only in the towns and may be almost ignored in a broad view of Macedonian

ethnography. It is long, no doubt, before that conviction forces itself upon the traveller. He will not derive it from the books and newspapers he has studied. They are written by journalists and travellers who have rarely been permitted to stray far outside the towns. There is a legend that travelling in the interior of Turkey is unsafe. That legend is sedulously fostered by the Turks, who are anxious to avail themselves of any pretext which will prevent Europeans from witnessing the misery and misgovernment of the rural population. It is encouraged by the native Christians of the towns, a timid folk who seldom (and with good reason) trust their own lives on a country road. And lastly, the few travellers who have performed the feat are not disposed to make light of their own achievements. But when one has ridden and walked alone over the roads and pathways of Crete and Macedonia, one ceases to put much faith in the fable. But if travelling in the interior is really moderately safe for Europeans, it is certainly uncomfortable. There are no tolerable inns save in three towns upon the railway which Europeans frequent—Uskub, Monastir, and Salonica—the roads are so execrable that a carriage journey is a purgatory, while saddle-horses, though cheap and good if one buys, are seldom to be had for hire.<sup>1</sup> If the risk and discomfort do not suffice to deter the traveller, the Turks never hesitate, unless he has strong official backing, to stop him peremptorily. The result is that it is of the towns that the traveller writes, in the towns that he forms his impressions, and from the townsmen that he gathers his knowledge. The market-place with its six languages and its four dialects remains in his mind as the type of Macedonia. The confusion and conflict of races is his main preoccupation. He moves among the consulates whose business is the creation by "propaganda" of artificial nationalities. It may escape him that the real Macedonia is the rural Macedonia, a land of village communities, where we may ride for weeks without encountering so much as a hamlet whose native language is other than Bulgarian or Albanian.

There are, it is true, a few real Turkish settlements in

<sup>1</sup> See Note A. at the end of the chapter.



Macedonia, or along its fringe, which live by agriculture. The Moslems of Kailar, on the southern verge of what is properly Macedonia, are genuine Osmanli Turks, who are said to have been exiled from Asia Minor in order that they might be isolated. There is also a similar Turkish belt inland from the Ægean in the rich tobacco-growing country between Serres and Drama, but this again is on the fringe (the eastern fringe) of what is properly Macedonia. Elsewhere even the Moslems of the rural districts come within our generalisation. They are either Albanians or Slavs,<sup>1</sup> converted by force or allured by self-interest to Islam, and while politically they form part of the ruling caste, in language, origin, and even in many of their social customs and institutions they do not differ from their Christian countrymen. As for the Greeks, they are nowhere a village people north of Castoria, save in the peninsula of Chalcidice, the island of Thasos, and along the coastline of the Ægean.

While it is true that the main elements of the rural population are only two in number, Slavs and Albanians, the real Macedonian complication lies not so much in the multiplicity of its warring races as in the difficulty of isolating them. It is comparatively easy to say what Albania proper is. It is the mountainous home of an unconquered race which faces the Adriatic from the Gulf of Arta in the south to Montenegro in the north. It includes the greater part of Epirus with the town of Jannina, the regions round Koritza and Elbasan as far east as the Lake of Ochrida, and the wild northern highlands on whose fringe lie the towns of Dibra, Prizrend, Ipek, and Scutari. Within these limits, save, indeed, within the walls of these four towns, there are few Slavs, and the population is the most homogeneous which can be found anywhere within the Turkish Empire. But for the Jews and Greeks in Jannina town, and some scattered villages of Vlachs, it is purely Albanian. But, on the other hand, one cannot say that the rest of the country is Slav. Physically, the limit

<sup>1</sup> These are generally known as Pomacks. They form a solid population in the almost purely Moslem belt between Drama and the Bulgarian frontier.

between Albania proper and Macedonia is abrupt and well defined. It is the Pindus range, which also divides Thessaly from Epirus, skirts the Lake of Ochrida on its western shore, and runs northward to the plain of Kóssovo. It is a stately range of glorious snow-clad summits, and it forms a wall so impenetrable that, as one looks at it from the plain, the peaks seem to run north and south in a continuous and gently undulating line, and one feels as though there must be some pathway of the giants connecting them, along which one might walk, hardly descending between the summits, from Montenegro to the Gulf of Corinth. And, indeed, this fancy is not very far from the truth. The Pindus range is really a continuous mountain-wall. There are only two practicable passes in all its northern extent. The first is the road from Elbasan to Ochrida, which follows the track of the Roman Via Egnatia. The second is the road from Uskub *viâ* Tetovo (Chalcandelen) to Prizrend, which winds over the shoulder of the Schar (Scardus). The latter, indeed, can only be called a pass by courtesy. Its summit was snow-clad when I crossed it in a blazing June, and gentians and Alpine roses flourished along the pathway. A "pass" suggests a road to the European mind, but these great Imperial highways are little more than sheep-tracks, along which one may lead, but hardly ride, a mule. So unbroken and virginal is this great chain, which ends not timidly or gradually, but in the superb conical peak of Liubotrn ("the lovely thorn"), that dominates the plain of Uskub and the fields of Kóssovo, as Olympus dominates Salonica. Here, one would have thought, was a natural frontier which ought to have separated Albania from Macedonia. But political conditions have made sport of geography, and there is to-day an Albania beyond Albania. It is probable that in the earlier centuries, before the Turkish conquest, the Pindus and Schar did divide the Albanians from the Slavs. Indeed, such encroachment as there was was rather in an opposite sense. It was the Slavs who invaded Albania. Since the Turkish conquest, however, the Albanian race has more than recovered its own. There has been, particularly in

the last two centuries, a steady movement of the Moslem Albanians eastward. Under the Crescent they are winning back more than all that they lost under the Cross. It is difficult to obtain statistics, and the country-folk will not generalise on the subject, but they will tell you that such an Albanian village settlement was made some eighty years ago, or that a village which used to own its own land, and was inhabited only by Bulgarians, came under the yoke of an Albanian chief a matter of fifty years back. This sort of thing has been going on steadily throughout the western half of Macedonia for two or three centuries at least, and the process is not yet complete. It is most noticeable in the north, and the country which was once the headquarters of the Servian race, and still bears the name of Old Servia, has now a population that is two-thirds Albanian. Elsewhere the emigration has been much less considerable, but it is still noteworthy. The whole province (Vilayet) of Monastir is studded with Albanian settlements. One finds them in enviable positions surrounded by three or four Bulgarian villages, over which the Albanians exercise a sort of semi-feudal terrorism. But the Albanian colonies are not mainly village communities. More often a chief (perhaps an ex-brigand who bought his peace with the Turks) has settled down in a big, rambling farm, with a fortified keep and a few retainers, and gradually acquired the position of landlord and the title of *bey*, with all that these things imply in economic servitude to the Slav peasantry. It is naturally in the more desirable districts, and, above all, in the fertile plains, that this has taken place.<sup>1</sup> The odd result follows that the wealthier Bulgarian villages are those on the lower slopes of the mountains, or even in rugged and isolated glens, since these have often been left more or less unmolested. The villages on the plains are mere collections of huts and cabins inhabited by serfs who work for an Albanian master. This movement of population was naturally welcomed and encouraged by the Turks. It tended to enslave and weaken their Slavonic subjects, and it helped to base their own

<sup>1</sup> See Note B. at the end of the chapter.

political ascendancy on a "garrison," as an Irishman would call it, consisting of men whose material prosperity was involved in the continuance of Mohamedan rule. The Albanians have now become so much a Macedonian race that their shepherds regularly invade even the Central Vardar valley in winter. There are also Albanian villages deliberately planted by the Turks for obvious strategic regions along the frontiers of free Bulgaria. Indeed, there was even some talk of planting Albanian colonies in the Adrianople region after the late insurrection.

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Of the races which inhabit Macedonia to-day only the Albanians have any claim to be autochthonous. Their southern branch, the Tosks, are most likely the lineal descendants of the ancient Epirotes. Their northern branch, the Ghegs, are probably the people whom the ancients called Illyrians. Of the ancient Macedonians whose original seat lay between Monastir and Vodena, no heirs remain, unless indeed any remnants of them escaped civilisation and became confounded with the kindred Albanians. The Thracians may possibly survive in the modern Vlachs, at least in so far as they became absorbed by Roman colonies. All these original races, though doubtless near cousins of the Greeks, must have been very imperfectly Hellenised during the classical and Macedonian periods. The Greek colonies were never much more than trading centres along the coast, and what was Greek in ancient times is Greek to-day. There is no evidence that the interior was ever settled by a rural Greek population. With the Roman conquest came a long period in which the two languages and the two civilisations struggled for the mastery. Military colonies were scattered liberally, and this planting of Latin towns took place only after a ruthless destruction and uprooting of the older Greek cities, whose populations were sold into slavery. Round these colonies the aboriginal inhabitants may have clustered, and acquired the Latin speech which the modern Vlachs still retain. One Byzantine writer remarks significantly that the Thracians never took kindly to Greek, while they acquired Latin with

ease (Prisci, "Historia," p. 190). By the sixth century Latin had become the language of a considerable part of Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace. We have acquired a habit of talking of the Byzantine Empire as though it had been a Greek Empire. It hardly acquired a national character until its long, final agony began. It was the Crusades which emphasised its Hellenism, by teaching the Eastern world that the Latin West was still peopled by barbarian hordes. Then in the double struggle against Franks and Turks a Greek patriotism revived too late. But during the earlier centuries of the Empire the Greeks were not even a ruling caste. The Emperors themselves were cosmopolitans of any and every stock. Many of the best of them were Armenians; Justinian was actually a Slav; few were Greeks. Nor was the Eastern Church naturally or originally Greek. The Arians showed a marked preference for the Latin language, and the persecutions of the Catholic party in which they indulged had sometimes the character of an anti-Greek movement. It was indeed during this period of persecution, while Latin-speaking Arians dominated the court that the Orthodox Church became, what it has always remained, the rallying point of Greek patriotism and the only outward embodiment of the Greek national idea. Latin, moreover, even in Justinian's time, was still so far the official language that his great legal codes were composed in it.

Whatever Greek population there may ever have been in the interior of rural Macedonia must have been effectually uprooted by the barbarian invasions. Race succeeded race, conqueror trod on the heels of conqueror, and though few of the strangers effected a permanent settlement until the coming of the Slavs, they destroyed the earlier civilisation and ruined the wealthier classes who had adopted Greek culture. The invaders broke up the large estates, and the slaves who tilled them were appropriated by the barbarians, or else regained their freedom during this secular anarchy. The cultured minority, reduced to penury, and driven to seek refuge in walled towns, sank to the level of their own slaves. The impoverishment was general, and with the

wealth of the old aristocracy its Hellenic culture disappeared. The general movement to the towns, aided by the amazing policy of the Emperors, created that unique product of Eastern conditions—the Levantine population. A Levantine is essentially a townsman, but not every townsman in the East is a Levantine. The true Levantine belongs to a race which inhabits only the towns—Greek, Jewish, or mongrel-European. He is bred in town, and from the cradle to the grave he never quits the town. He despises the country and the ruder alien races which inhabit the country. Fear confines him within the walls. He knows nothing of muscular work. He has his conquerors and his rulers always with him. He becomes timid and physically incapable of resistance. The growth of this Levantine population had begun centuries before the coming of the Turks. The country was either a desert or a hostile region inhabited by strange barbarians. Whatever military or patriotic instincts the Greeks of the Macedonian towns may have possessed were systematically suppressed by Byzantine policy. The theory of Constantinople was that the function of the settled Greek population was to earn taxes, and Byzantine taxation must have been oppressive both in amount and in incidence. The Greeks were not only exempt from military service even for the defence of their own provinces, but actually forbidden to enlist. They were already what they are under the Turks, a purely civilian population grinding out tribute for a costly governing machine. No landed proprietor or agricultural labourer was allowed to serve, and the army was composed entirely of mercenaries and barbarians. Up till the reign of Justinian the Greek cities still possessed some local independence. But Justinian, casting about for fresh sources of Imperial income, confiscated their revenues. The consequence was that the roads were everywhere neglected, and the police disbanded. Without roads and without security the cities became more than ever isolated, and the general decline towards barbarism and decay proceeded at a swifter pace than ever. Finally, as if to complete the ruin of Hellenism in Macedonia, Justinian, who

lived in constant terror of revolt, suppressed the militias which the Greek cities had begun to revive under the menace of the barbarian invasions, and left them exposed to the mercy of any raiding horde. When a professor in modern Athens puts forward the theory that the Macedonians of to-day are really Greeks in disguise, the answer is to be found in this chapter of history. Macedonia never was Greek, but such Hellenic civilisation as it possessed was ruined long before the coming of the Turks, and long before the rise of the Servian and Bulgarian Empires. It was ruined by an unconscious conspiracy between the Byzantine Empire and the barbarians.

The interior once abandoned by the settled civilised population which paid taxes, its fate became a matter of indifference to Byzantium. The barbarians acted after their kind, settled where they pleased, and raided as they pleased. The only concern of the Empire was now its commerce. The diminished Greek population occupied the sea-coast of the Ægean and the Adriatic, and inland the sole anxiety of its rulers was to keep open the great main roads which carried the wealth of Asia to Western markets. Indian trade now followed the Black Sea route, and the Via Egnatia from Salonica to Dyrrachium was still kept open. The Goths, the Huns, and the Avars did not settle in Macedonia. But the Slavonian tribes which accompanied the Avars as allies undoubtedly did settle, and their villages were to be found even south of the Via Egnatia, so early as the reign of Heraclius (565–633 A.D.). Serbs and Croats were actually invited by Heraclius to settle. As though to encourage barbarians at the expense of Greeks, they lived tax-free and served as militia, despite the fact that they were cultivators, and they doubtless amalgamated with the earlier Slavonic immigrants. These primitive Slav settlers differed widely from the more savage barbarians. They were not so much a pastoral as an agricultural people. They desired to settle rather than to raid. They grouped themselves in villages, which enjoyed a certain communal life, and expected to be left in local independence. They were not properly a

political people. They formed no organised State. They had no aristocracy, and their leaders were probably elective. They formed neither clans nor towns. Their unit was the hamlet within which their knowledge and their social life was contained. They were jealous of any authority which sought to unite them, and ready to engage in internecine feuds. Their sense of race must have been quite undeveloped, and they readily blended with any other kindred people speaking a Slav tongue. For them the village was the one political reality. Servian and Bulgarian conquests can have altered little in their daily life, and even the Turkish tyranny still left them their indissoluble political atom—their village. They must have been, ten and twelve centuries back, the same primitive and conservative people which they are to-day, plodding, laborious, unaggressive, with the fraternity of village life for the foundation of their virtues. Christianity has altered their theory of the next world, but it can have changed very little in their view of this.

The purely Slavonic races, whether they were called Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, or Antai, had undoubtedly peopled Macedonia by the end of the seventh century. But they pretended to no national cohesion, and were not politically a menace to Byzantium. They were rather settlers than conquerors. It required the infusion of non-Slavonic blood to fire them with political ambitions and to organise them into a rival to the Eastern Empire. This impulse came from the Bulgarians (Volga-men), a non-Aryan people akin to the Turks, who had long been settled on the Volga. Their organisation contrasted sharply with that of the Slavs. They had an absolute king or khan, who ruled them as an Oriental despot. They were polygamists, owned slaves, and were accustomed to military discipline. Like the Turks, they shaved their heads and wore pigtails. They burned their widows, and indulged in human sacrifices. These disagreeable Asiatic nomads had no civilisation of their own. They adopted the Slav language, while modifying its structure, and they readily amalgamated and intermarried with the Slavs. This process may have begun



before they left the Volga, and it was certainly complete before their conversion to Christianity in the year 864, since Cyril and Methodius preached to them in Slav. Their kingdom was founded near Varna in 678, and it covered at first pretty much the territory occupied by modern Bulgaria. Though the Bulgarians gave it its organisation and made it a power, it must none the less have been predominantly Slavonic in blood and in traditions. Their kingdom was hardly consolidated before they began to move upon Thrace and Macedonia. They besieged Salonica as early as 679, and repeated their invasions whenever the Empire was occupied in dealing with the Arabs or the Turks. Under their Khan Krum they overran Thrace and twice appeared under the walls of Constantinople, defeated and did to death two emperors in succession (Nicephorus and Michael), and made one of the immortal legends of the Balkans by converting the skull of Nicephorus into a drinking-cup. Nearly a century later (892), under their Khan Simeon, who assumed the title of Tsar, the Bulgarians founded their first Empire. It extended at first over the whole of Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, and Bulgaria. Under the third Tsar, Samuel, the eastern provinces were lost, but the Empire remained firmly seated in the west, with its capital at Ochrida, where it maintained its independence till 1018.<sup>1</sup> It was thus definitely a Macedonian state, and Ochrida acquired in the tradition of the Macedonian Slavs a sentimental prestige which it still retains. After an hiatus of over a century and a half the Bulgarians once more appear as an Imperial Power (1186), under a dynasty of adventurers, by name Asen, who were of Vlach origin. It represented an alliance between Vlachs and Slavs, and it can have been "Bulgarian" only in the sense that it revived the Bulgarian tradition of conquest. It made the most of the anarchy which followed the Fourth Crusade, and allied itself sometimes with the

<sup>1</sup> The final blow was dealt by the Emperor Basil, the Bulgar-killer, who is said to have slaughtered 15,000 Bulgarians in a single battle, and to have sent back the remnant of 150 with their eyes put out to tell the tale to Tsar Samuel.

Greeks and sometimes with the Latins. Three of its sovereigns were assassinated. The fourth, Asen II., was the greatest power in Eastern Europe. He ruled the entire Balkan Peninsula including Serbia and Albania, and left the Latins nothing but Constantinople, with which his capital Tirnovo vied in the splendour of its buildings and its material prosperity. But the second Bulgarian Empire fell to pieces immediately after Asen's death in 1241, though Bulgaria retained a shadow of independence until Tirnovo was burned by the Turks in 1393. The interval between Asen's death and the coming of the Turks was marked by the rise of an ephemeral Servian State. It first attained a national existence about 1150, under Stephen Nemanya, who was an elective chief in Novi Bazar. Its natural extension was rather to the north than towards Macedonia. Its centre was in the plain of Kossovo (Old Serbia), and it included Bosnia, Montenegro, and part of the modern Serbia. After the collapse of the second Bulgarian Empire Serbia became the dominant power in the Balkans, and now pushed southward over Macedonia and Albania. Under its last Emperor, Stephen Dushan, who fixed his capital at Uskub, it covered the whole Balkan Peninsula except Salonica and Constantinople. Stephen defeated Hungary and the Turks, and seemed on the point of taking Constantinople and destroying the Byzantine Empire in its last refuge when he died suddenly, perhaps by poison, in his camp (1356). His empire, like Asen's, collapsed on his death at the moment of its greatest splendour, and its discordant remnants became the easy prey of the Turks, who finally crushed a weak and disloyal coalition of Servian, Albanian, and Bulgarian princelings on the fatal field of Kossovo (1389). The Servian aristocracy either fled to Bosnia, Montenegro, and Hungary, or accepted Islam, and Macedonia became once more a country of little villages whose whole struggle henceforward was to maintain their isolation and their identity under yet another alien tyranny.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This sketch of the political vicissitudes of Macedonia before the coming of the Turks is necessarily incomplete. There was also a rather flourishing Vlach State, whose centre was in Thessaly, which

Seven centuries elapsed between the complete settlement of Macedonia by Slavonic races and its final conquest by the Turks. Its history during this period suggests little progress towards any stable organisation. It was not the Byzantines or the Serbs who destroyed the second Bulgarian Empire. It was not the Turks who destroyed the Servian Empire. Both fell to pieces, as it were, of their own weight. They fell, both of them, at the moment of their greatest splendour and widest extension, a fact which suggests that they must have been held together, not by the consent of the people, but by the strong will of a vigorous tyrant. It was not in accordance with the traditions of the Slavs to accept a dynasty or build up an Empire; loyalty to a leader of genius, such as Dushan must have been, was another matter. But, indeed, except so far as their disappearance left the field open to the Turks, there is no great reason to regret either the Servian or the Bulgarian Empire. They were purely military Powers, and their glory, such as it was, reposed solely on the achievements of their arms. Their administration was modelled on that of Byzantium. Their official Church—despite the fact that most of their Emperors coquetted with Rome—reproduced all the characteristics of Greek orthodoxy. Their literature was imitative, and, indeed, hardly existed save in translations from Greek ecclesiastical works. Nor was even their architecture their own, so far as they built at all. They either copied Byzantium or imported artists from Italy. Their civilisation, in short, was second-hand, and it must have been a growth so brief and so divorced from the life of the people that it neither left its impress on the peasants, nor in turn received the quickening of their peculiar genius.

included in its dominions the southern slopes of the Pindus and Southern Macedonia up to Castoria. It was semi-independent as early as the latter half of the eleventh century, and survived until Dushan's conquests—a period of three hundred years, which is in the Balkans a highly respectable antiquity. It must not be confused with the Vlach-Bulgarian Empire of the Asens. From 1204 to 1222 Salonica was the seat of a Latin crusaders' kingdom, under Boniface of Monferrat. This was destroyed by the new Greek power which had arisen in Epirus under the Comneni.





ON THE SHORE OF LAKE OCHRIDA



MEDIAEVAL CASTLE AT OCHRIDA

The villages continued to live their own life, and whatever was native and original among the Slavs of Macedonia grew directly from peasant soil. The popular ballads have more value than the ecclesiastical histories. The native Bogomil heresy (see p. 67) was a vastly more interesting attempt to understand the Universe than anything to be found in the formularies of the official Church. The traditional embroideries of the peasant women suggest that the instinct for art might under happier conditions have found some worthy expression. But Macedonia never had its chance. The Crusaders, the Turks, and the absence of political ideals among the Slavs, prevented the formation of any stable State which might have kept the peace and allowed them to develop on their own lines. A tolerant tyranny, even if alien, might have brought this about as well as a native Power, provided they had been allowed to lead the village life for which they have so marked a taste, in comparative freedom and security.

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It is small wonder that a history so troubled and so uncertain has borne its fruit in endless political controversies. One hundred years ago it would have been hard to find a central Macedonian who could have answered with any intelligence the question whether he were Servian or Bulgarian by race. The memory of the past had vanished utterly and nothing remained save a vague tradition among the peasants that their forefathers had once been free. I questioned some boys from a remote mountain village near Ochrida which had neither teacher nor resident priest, and where not a single inhabitant was able to read, in order to discover what amount of traditional knowledge they possessed. I took them up to the ruins of the Bulgarian Tsar's fortress which dominates the lake and the plain from the summit of an abrupt and curiously rounded hill. "Who built this place?" I asked them. The answer was significant—"The Free Men." "And who were they?" "Our grandfathers." "Yes, but were they Serbs or Bulgarians or Greeks or Turks?" "They weren't Turks, they were Christians." And this seemed to be about the

measure of their knowledge. I think the lads, who had just seen an insurrection, had their own romantic notions of politics. The old fortress did mean something to them. It reminded them that they had a free past. But obviously Tsar Simeon's Empire and all its ephemeral successors had quite faded from the popular consciousness.<sup>1</sup> It is sometimes said that even the name Bulgarian was forgotten. That is, I think, an exaggeration. But neither Bulgars nor Serbs were officially recognised by the Turks as a distinct race, as the Greeks always were. In Europe, it is true, they were hardly so much as a memory. Voltaire writes in *Candide* of an imaginary "Bulgarian" army which performed amazing "Bulgarian" exercises as though the name meant no more than Cloud-Cuckoo-Land or Ruritania. The Serbs fared somewhat better. Their Empire, though no more solid or enduring than the Bulgarian, came later in time, and round its destruction at Kossovo lingered a passionate and sentimental legend enshrined in a cycle of interminable ballads. Certainly in the real Servian country of Kossovo the past was never forgotten. Then, too, while both the Bulgarian Patriarchate of Ochrida and the Servian Patriarchate of Ipek were suppressed as early as 1570 through the machinations of the Greeks, the Archbishopric of Ipek which succeeded the Patriarchate, partially contrived to retain its national Servian character until 1767. Finally, the Serbs had in the free Republic of Ragusa a centre which, despite its Catholicism and its thoroughly Italian character, none the less did much for the Servian language and issued from its presses many volumes of Servian verse. The Servians in Hungary also profited by European culture; while the liberation of modern Servia in the first decades of the last century was facilitated by its distance from Constantinople. The Bulgarians enjoyed none of these advantages. Their ecclesiastical autonomy was more completely suppressed. They had no free sister like little Ragusa. They had no exiled brethren in Europe. They were within easy striking distance of the capital. Inevitably, then, their awakening

<sup>1</sup> See Note C. at end of chapter

came later, and but for the patronage of Russia it might never have come at all.

Are the Macedonians Serbs or Bulgars? The question is constantly asked and dogmatically answered in Belgrade and Sofia. But the lesson of history obviously is that there is no answer at all. They are not Serbs, for their blood can hardly be purely Slavonic. There must be in it some admixture of Bulgarian and other non-Aryan stock (Kuman Tartars, Pechenegs, &c.). On the other hand, they can hardly be Bulgarians, for quite clearly the Servian immigrations and conquests must have left much Servian blood in their veins, and the admixture of non-Aryan blood can scarcely be so considerable as it is in Bulgaria. They are probably very much what they were before either a Bulgarian or a Servian Empire existed—a Slav people derived from rather various stocks, who invaded the peninsula at different periods. But they had originally no clear consciousness of race, and any strong Slavonic Power was able to impose itself upon them. One may say safely that for historical reasons the people of Kossovo and the North-West are definitely Serbs, while the people of Ochrida are clearly Bulgarians. The affinities of the rest of Macedonia are decided on purely political grounds. Language teaches us very little. The differences between literary Servian and Bulgarian are not considerable, but they are very definite. The Macedonian dialect is neither one nor the other, but in certain structural features it agrees rather with Bulgarian than with Servian. This, however, means little; for modern Servian is not the language of Dushan, but the dialect of Belgrade. A southern Macedonian finds no difficulty in making himself understood in Dushan's country (Uskub and Prizrend), though he will feel a foreigner in Belgrade. One must also discount the effects of propaganda. A priest or teacher from Sofia or Belgrade who settles in a village will modify its dialect considerably in the course of a generation. This process may be observed at work round such centres as Uskub, where both Servians and Bulgarians are active. A trained ear can now detect a difference of speech



between villages which are only a few miles apart, and even the foreigner notices that while the Bulgarophil peasants answer a question in the affirmative with "Da," the Serbophils say "Yis." The element of accident in these political affinities is very large. It is not uncommon to find fathers who are themselves officially "Greeks" equally proud of bringing into the world "Greek," "Servian," "Bulgarian," and "Roumanian" children. The passion for education is strong, and the various propagandas pander eagerly to it. If a father cannot contrive to place all his sons in a secondary school belonging to the race which he himself affects, the prospect of a bursary will often induce him to plant them out in rival establishments. It is, of course, a point of honour that a boy who is educated at the expense of one or other of these peoples must himself adopt its language and its nationality. The same process is at work among the villages. I remember vividly my amazement when I encountered this quaint phenomenon during my first visit to Macedonia. I was talking to a wealthy peasant who came in from a neighbouring village to Monastir market. He spoke Greek well, but hardly like a native. "Is your village Greek," I asked him, "or Bulgarian?" "Well," he replied, "it is Bulgarian now, but four years ago it was Greek." The answer seemed to him entirely natural and commonplace. "How," I asked in some bewilderment, "did that miracle come about?" "Why," said he, "we are all poor men, but we want to have our own school and a priest who will look after us properly. We used to have a Greek teacher. We paid him £5 a year and his bread, while the Greek consul paid him another £5; but we had no priest of our own. We shared a priest with several other villages, but he was very unpunctual and remiss. We went to the Greek Bishop to complain, but he refused to do anything for us. The Bulgarians heard of this and they came and made us an offer. They said they would give us a priest who would live in the village and a teacher to whom we need pay nothing. Well, sir, ours is a poor village, and so of course we became Bulgarians." One can picture this rather quaint

revolution. The little man who had once been to Athens abandons the hopeless task of teaching Greek to children who had learnt only Slav from their mothers. The legend that Alexander the Great was a Greek goes out by one road, and the rival myth that Alexander was a Bulgarian comes in by the other. The Mass, which was droned unpunctually in ancient Greek, is now droned (punctually) in ancient Slav. But beneath the rather comic aspects of this incident the fact remains that the village was now obtaining education in its own tongue, and opening its doors to civilising influences which came to it in a form which it could assimilate and make its own. The bribe of £5 did but hasten an inevitable process. I have heard a witty French consul declare that with a fund of a million francs he would undertake to make all Macedonia French. He would preach that the Macedonians are the descendants of the French crusaders who conquered Salonica in the twelfth century, and the francs would do the rest. But after all, the Greeks dispose of ample funds, and yet the Greeks have lost Macedonia.

But undoubtedly any Slav race which belonged to the Orthodox faith might have won Macedonia, given the necessary tact and the necessary funds. Serbia or Montenegro, or even Russia, might have done it. In point of fact it is Bulgaria which has succeeded. History and ethnology and comparative philology may take what side in the controversy they please. The Macedonians are Bulgars to-day because a free and progressive Bulgaria has known how to attract them. Serbia did not exercise an influence so compelling, and the Servian cause in Macedonia proper is in consequence a negligible and artificial movement. It exists only in so far as it pays its way, and in so far as the Turks encourage it as a counterpoise to the menacing Bulgarian agitation. The very fact that the Turks smile upon it is a proof that it is innocuous and doomed to futility. As things are to-day the Servian consuls are about as likely to win the Macedonians for Serbia as the American missionaries are to convert them to Protestantism.

It is easy to indicate some of the many reasons for

Servia's failure.<sup>1</sup> In the first place, it is only recently that Servia has taken much interest in Macedonia. Up till the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Servia's ambitions were directed rather to these genuinely Servian lands than to Macedonia. Even after the Treaty of Berlin it was long before she realised that the northern and western part of her natural heritage was irreparably lost. Then, however much she might have wished to repair her error, it was too late. The Bulgarians had already created their national Church; the majority of the Macedonian Slavs had already adhered to it, and its schools were firmly established and thoroughly popular. Servia could not bring herself to break with the "Greek" Orthodox Church, and accordingly she had no fold into which the Macedonians might be shepherded. Thirdly, her internal weakness tied her hands. She had suffered a disastrous military defeat at Slivnitza at the hands of the Bulgarians, and from this her prestige in the Balkans has never recovered. Her finances were and still are in the utmost disorder; and while King Milan squandered money on his pleasures and sold the country to foreign speculators, there was no surplus to spare for propaganda. Under Milan and Alexander Servia passed through one long and shameful crisis, and her domestic revolutions and reigns of terror were preoccupation enough. Lastly, one must recognise that, despite their kinship and their very similar history, there is a profound difference between the Bulgarian and the Servian national characters—a difference which has its counterpart in two physical types.<sup>2</sup> The Servians are a pleasure-loving people, with more æsthetic sense and a more excitable disposition than the Bulgarians. They have not the same power of continuous work, the same indifference to pain, the same resolute stolidity, or the same habit of mental application. During eighty years of freedom they have made less progress morally and materially than the Bulgarians in twenty-

<sup>1</sup> I am speaking here of Macedonia proper. In "Old Servia" the Bulgarians have no footing, nor do they seek to acquire one. See Chapter VIII., Section 7, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> See Note D. at end of chapter.

five years. One consequence of the rapid economic development of Bulgaria has been that her steady demand for labour has encouraged a ceaseless flow of Macedonian immigrants, who spend a few months or a few years in the principality and then return to their villages with their savings. These men become missionaries of the Bulgarian idea. They spread the fame of her liberty, her wealth, and her rapid progress. The number who go to Servia, on the other hand, is relatively inconsiderable, and their reports can hardly be entirely favourable—though for all her political instability Servia still presents a sufficiently striking contrast to Turkey. When, in addition to these advantages, the Bulgarophil Macedonians started their marvellously-organised revolutionary committee in 1893, the Servian cause received its death-blow. By way of emphasising her antagonism to Bulgaria, official Servia now adopted an openly Turcophil policy, and nothing could be more fatal to the prospects of any Christian race in Turkey. The Macedonian peasantry will bestow their allegiance only on a propaganda which promises them some speedy prospect of release from the Ottoman yoke. Finally, there is this great difference between the rival propagandas, that while the Bulgarians are working for the autonomy of Macedonia, the Servians and the Greeks aim only at its annexation to their own country. The result is that their activities seem to be for the profit of their own land, whereas the Bulgarians are undoubtedly creating a spirit of local Macedonian patriotism. The Servian movement is a purely official agitation, guided and financed in Belgrade; whereas, despite the sympathy of Sofia, the Bulgarian Revolutionary Committee is a genuine Macedonian organisation.

The Servians have a respectable historical and ethnographical claim to be reckoned a Macedonian race, however weak their political position may be. With the Greeks matters are reversed. The legend that Macedonia is a Greek province like Crete and Cyprus, a true limb of *Hellas Irredeempta*, is firmly planted in the European, and especially in the English, mind. Lord Salisbury advanced

this curious argument in the crudest form against the Treaty of San Stefano. It keeps its hold in the West no doubt because the Greeks are well known through their commercial colonies and their romantic history, while the Bulgarians are a purely local race which has no roots beyond the East. And yet it is a sheer fiction and a trifling with words. The Greeks are not a Macedonian race, though they have a powerful Church and a considerable party in Macedonia. If one takes the linguistic test there are practically no villages in European Turkey whose mother-tongue is Greek, save along the coasts of the Ægean and the Black Sea, in the peninsulas of Chalcidice, and the Thracian Chersonnese, and in the extreme south of Macedonia near the Thessalian frontier.\* They have a large population in Salonica and Constantinople, but Salonica is nevertheless predominantly a Jewish town, while Constantinople is hopelessly cosmopolitan. Historically their claims are no better. The Byzantine Empire had no footing in the interior of Macedonia after it had ceased to be Roman and international, and had become patriotic and Greek. The Greek claim rests mainly upon this, that there is still a large faction of the Macedonian population which, either from fear, from superstition, or from preference, remains within the "Greek" Orthodox (*i.e.*, the Patriarchist) Church. These people are Vlachs, Albanians, Serbs, or other Slavs of uncertain origin, but they are no more Greeks than the Orthodox Russians are. But the growth of Greek influence is none the less a curious study. It depended almost entirely upon the Church, and it must have been immeasurably stronger in the Balkan peninsula after the coming of the Turks than it ever was before. It embraced not merely Macedonia, but Roumania, Bulgaria, and even Servia as well. The few Slavs in the interior who were educated at all were taught to regard themselves as Greeks, and the very tradition of their origin was in danger of dying out. Two fatal errors alone wrecked what was nothing less than a scheme for Hellenising the Balkan peninsula. The women

\* These were the only districts of Macedonia which joined the Greeks in the War of Independence—a very significant fact.

were not educated, and for all the Greek schools might do every Slav child learned his own despised tongue at his mother's knee. The peasants also were neglected. The Greeks regarded them with the unmeasured and stupid contempt which a quick town-bred people instinctively feels for a race of cultivators. They were barbarians, beasts of burden, men only "in the catalogue." The Greeks denied the rights of men to the Slav peasants and refused to accept them as brethren. The consequence was that the peasants never quite lost their sense of separation, and a certain dim consciousness of nationality remained, rooted in injuries and hatred. The nemesis came at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Greeks, rising at last to the height of their national idea, struck their great blow for freedom. The flag of Greek independence was first unfurled, not in Greece, but in Roumania, which had long been ruled by Greek Governors appointed by the Turks, and the Greek army found itself to its amazement confronted not merely by Turkish hordes, but by native Wallachian bands inspired by a national patriotism of their own.

There is no region of the earth where the national idea has wrought such havoc or rioted in such wantonness of power as in Macedonia. It poisons and secularises religion. It sanctions murder, excuses violence, and leaves more kindness between man and beast than between the adherents of rival races. In its name peoples have done great deeds which liberty should have inspired, and perpetrated oppressions of an iniquity so colossal that only an idea could have prompted them. The miseries of ten centuries have been its work, and the face of the Balkans to-day, furrowed with hatreds, callous from long cruelty, dull with perpetual suffering, is its image and memorial. One turns from a survey of these races and their rivalries, asking what future of peace and common work there can be while the curse of this national idea still teaches men that the vital fact in their lives is the tradition, or the memory, or the habit of speech which divides them from one another.

## NOTE A. (See p. 87.)

In relation to the wealth and density of its population Macedonia is well supplied with railways. They were constructed mainly with Austrian and German capital, not at all to benefit the natives, but as a safe and paying investment. Their legitimate revenue from traffic is inconsiderable, but the interest on the capital sunk in them is provided by a guarantee calculated upon every kilometre constructed. The result is that they twist and gyrate to increase their length, even when they cross a plain. The tithes wrung from the peasantry bear the burden, and the international control over Turkish finance secures punctual payment. There is one line from Salonica to Monastir which it was intended to continue to the Adriatic either by the Coritza-Avlona, or by the Ochrida-Durazzo route. Another line connects Salonica with Uskub, and runs thence to the Servian frontier, connecting at Nisch with the main Orient line. A third runs from Salonica to Dedeagatch and Adrianople, providing an overland route to the capital. There is also a short junction line between this eastern system and the Uskub line, while a branch line on which trains run thrice a week connects Uskub with Albania, its terminus being Mitrovitza. Setting *bachsheesh* aside, the consideration which induced the Turks to consent to the construction of these railways was no doubt their strategic value. The same order of motives makes them obstinately refuse their assent to projects for linking up the Macedonian railways with the Bulgarian system (*viâ* Uskub-Kumanovo-Kustendil) and with the Greek system (*viâ* Salonica-Veria-Larissa). Apart from military trains, the traffic on all these lines is confined to one mixed goods and passenger train in each direction daily, and even in these trains the passengers are largely soldiers and the goods military stores. Of the water-ways little or no use is made. The greater lakes carry some local traffic, but the largest of them are situated in the least populous and most disturbed regions of Macedonia. The Vardar is a capricious river which runs broad and shallow in summer through the plains of Kossovo and Uskub, while it narrows about Kuprili (*i.e.*, the Bridge) and Demirkapou (*i.e.*, the Iron Gate), a rushing torrent which sweeps at a tempestuous pace through a narrow and romantic gorge. Nothing, needless to say, has ever been attempted to make it navigable. It reaches the sea through several months in a vast plain of wastes and marshes, which is of all sights the most desolate and depressing. Here in the old days, with Pella as its capital, was the seat of the Macedonian Empire. To-day, for the want of a few trenches and canals, it is abandoned to the storks and the bitterns. For the rest, the main traffic of Macedonia is still performed by carriers, mainly Vlach by race, who convey their merchandise on pack-horses over mountain tracks with comparative disregard of the roads. There are a few roads which were designed as macadamised *chaussées*. They preserve their character for a few miles outside the town from which they start, and resume it again within sight of their destination. In the interval they are broad tracks of unsophisticated earth, varied by broken bridges, which usually serve to indicate the whereabouts of a ford. The better of these roads are sometimes used by wheeled traffic—lumbering waggons of primitive structure, drawn by black buffaloes. The drivers of these, for some odd reason, are usually Moslems, and their chief art consists of keeping the spines of their buffaloes cool by irrigating them at frequent intervals with long

ladles, which they dip into every passing pool. In winter wheeled traffic is seldom possible, and the trade of the Moslem buffalo-drivers passes into the hands of the Christian Vlachs—and their art appears to lie chiefly in so placing their wooden pack-saddles as to make a fresh raw sore at each journey. If the beasts of Macedonia could be polled they would certainly not vote for the expulsion of the Turks.

#### NOTE B. (See p. 90.)

The physical conformation of Western Macedonia suggests a vast series of saucer-like basins, sometimes lakes, sometimes broad plains surrounded by mountains which are more or less continuous spurs and offshoots from the Pindus range. Eastern Macedonia, on the other hand, can be considered rather as two great valleys watered by the Vardar and the Struma. Three of the Western lakes are of considerable size and depth—Ochrida, Presba, and Ostrovo. Ochrida is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful—so far as my experience goes, quite the most beautiful—of the lakes of Europe. The mountains which surround it are lofty, rugged, and unbroken. Their outlines are not swathed in trees, and for the greater part of the year they are snow-clad. There is little verdure, but the climate provides the most various effects of purple, blue, and sandy-red. Castoria is a smaller lake, but it would be difficult to exaggerate its romantic beauty, set, as it is, among hills and mountains, which lend themselves to endless illusions and surprises. There are also two smaller lakes near Sorovitch. The great plain of Pelagonia, on the edge of which at the mouth of passes the towns of Monastir and Florina are situated, seems as though it might once have been a lake. But, indeed, it may rather have been the plains which became lakes. Ostrovo, for example, is of comparatively recent origin, and a submerged village can still be seen under its dark waters. Kossovo is the largest plain of all, and Uskub stands, as it were, on a rocky islet in the centre of another great depression. The climate of Macedonia is very various. Salonica is a typical Mediterranean town. Ochrida, high though it is, enjoys a balmy air and a genial winter, while Resna, not much higher and only six hours' ride to the east, is bitterly cold at Christmas. The plains, if they are exposed to the winds from the north-east, are often colder than the mountains. The atmosphere lacks the dazzling clearness of Greece, and mists are common round Monastir and Uskub. Malarial fever is a terrible scourge in the marshy districts at the Vardar mouths, and also in the low-lying and undrained plains around Drama and Kavalla. The upper Struma valley, on the other hand, has a rigorous highland climate. The products and the soil are as diverse as the climate. Spring begins in some regions in early February, in others towards April. The summer is everywhere torrid, but unhealthy only in the marshy plains.

#### NOTE C. (See p. 100.)

After writing the above passage I met with this interesting confirmation in an essay by the Bulgarian poet, Pencho Slaveikoff, prefixed to "The Shade of the Balkans" (David Nutt, 1903):—

"Our folk-songs do not go back beyond the frontier of the fourteenth century, that is, they do not record historic events of an earlier



date. The fact is very remarkable and significant. Hero-songs or epic-songs (as they are also called) can only be fashioned by a people which has national self-consciousness, and that is just what our ancestors in the days of the free Bulgarian monarchy did not possess. We have, in fact, to wait till the nineteenth century before that radiant sun breaks through ; before the beams go whirling through our veins we have five hundred years of slavery. What the world had not shown us we found in a prison. The sole occupation of all those great kings of ours was to enliven their people, and instead of fostering the national energies, frantically squandered them in many a vain heroic progress, now to Byzantium, now to Dyrrachium. But for their people they made no progress, so these have taken a ruthless vengeance, and have not dammed the waves of oblivion. They have preserved for us in their song the names of several prehistoric beasts, but not of one solitary king."

NOTE D. (See p. 104.)

It is a dangerous thing to generalise about physical types from impressions which one forms in travelling. But the impression of physical grace which one gains in Belgrade is irresistible. The women are not striking, but the men—for example, the too numerous officers—are notably tall, well-built in a lithe way, and frequently handsome in feature. In Sofia, on the other hand, physical beauty is depressingly rare. The officers are shorter, stouter, and altogether less pretentious than in Servia. Even the children seem, on the whole, rather ugly. But strong, sturdy, and enduring the Bulgarians certainly are.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BULGARIAN MOVEMENT

**A** TRAVELLER'S first impressions of the Bulgarians of Macedonia are rarely favourable. It is a race with few external attractions ; and it seldom troubles to sue for sympathy, or assist the process of mutual understanding. It is neither hospitable nor articulate. The Slav peasant has no passwords to the foreigner's heart. He cannot point, like the Greek, to a great past ; he cannot boast that his forbears have been your tutors in civilisation. He leaves you to form what opinion of him you please, and shows himself only in the drab of his daily costume of commonplace. He will not call on you unbidden at your hotel, or invite you to his schools, or insist that you shall visit his churches. And, perforce, you study him from the outside. You find him dull, reserved, and unfriendly, for experience has taught him to see in every member of an alien race a probable enemy. He lacks the plausibility, the grace, the quick intelligence of the Greek. He has nothing of the dignified courtesy, the defiant independence, the mediæval chivalry of the Albanian. Nor has he physical graces to recommend him ; and even the women are unprepossessing. He has no sense for externals, no instinct for display. If he is wealthy he hoards his wealth. If he is poor he lives in squalor and in dirt. His national costumes are rarely picturesque, his national dances monotonous, his national songs unmusical. You may learn to respect his industry, his vast capacity for uninteresting work ; but it is all the toil of the labourer, and the spirit of the artist and the craftsman is not in him. He erects

against you a bulwark of deceit. He treats your every question as a snare into which he refuses to enter. Either he answers with feigned stupidity and an assumption of ignorance, or else he seeks to divine the response you expect, and proceeds forthwith to give it to you with no thought of its relation to the truth. It is not exactly lying as we understand it. Rather the peasant has no conception of a frank relationship with any superior. He has been demoralised by dealing with masters who are childish and capricious as well as tyrannical. His vices are the mean habits of the down-trodden, and if in any capacity you have need of courage or honesty or fidelity, it is the Albanian and not the Bulgarian whom you will employ. You may learn to view these faults in a true historical perspective. You may bring yourself to think of them rather as the shameful evidence of the conqueror's wrongdoing than any proof of original depravity in the conquered. The more you learn the more you will incline to a kindly pity, but at the first you are hardly likely to admire this stolid and unprepossessing race. Time and accident alone bring the clue to a different reading of its character.<sup>1</sup>

It came to me by chance in the silent streets of Macedonian towns—this occult and difficult clue. One hears in them neither music nor laughter. The peasant trudges silently in, his wife some paces behind him, and speaks only to chaffer at the bazaar. The townsman is too busy in dodging spies and stepping over dogs to break the melancholy silence. And yet, as the winter went on, a plaintive melody began to detach itself from the dull background of depression. I hardly heeded it until one evening I heard it at the fireside of a Bulgarian house. I can think of nothing in my experience more homely, more complacent, more comfortable than that family circle with the plain daughters, the shy son, and the fat parents in undress. It was an atmosphere of crude materialism, and nothing seemed more

<sup>1</sup> Another reason why the Bulgarians of Macedonia seem so unattractive is that all their best men are exiles in free Bulgaria. There is no educated class left to leaven the rest, or to represent the nation to the traveller.

distant than ideas, more remote than revolution. And then, suddenly, they sang it, the plaintive air of the streets. It brought a fire to their eyes, a resonance to their voices, a blush to their phlegmatic cheeks. It was a song of revolt. It summoned the young men to the hills, chid the old laggards who "sit in *cafés*," celebrated one by one the chiefs who had fought and died in the autumn, and prophesied a future of freedom. From that evening onward the air was always in my ears. Sometimes it was a school-boy who whistled it in the streets; sometimes a group of young men who chanted it, with all its daring words, within earshot of a Turkish sentry. It mingled with the tread of armed patrols and the rumble of ammunition carts. It challenged the night-watchman, and insulted the Pasha's carriage. Let the Turks be never so busy with their ostentatious precautions, their endless mobilisation against the coming campaign, this song of defiance was always in the air, mocking their dull wits and their useless preparations. They neither heard nor understood, foreigners that they are in their own country. It played about their ears unheeded, like a song of doom, sung by the land itself. And here at length was the real rhythm of the Bulgarian heart. Henceforward the lies and the silences mattered little. One could overhear this inarticulate people talking to itself. I was amid a race that was organising itself for freedom. It leads a double life, caring little for the ugly, unimportant present in which it suffers, intrigues and compromises, postponing its greater qualities for the future it has resolved to conquer.

The insurgent movement is in reality a genuine Macedonian movement, prepared by Macedonians, led by Macedonians, and assisted by the passionate sympathy of the vast majority of the Slav population. There is hardly a village that has not joined the organisation. In the larger towns, like Monastir, there are few individual Bulgarians who are not active and willing members. Ten and twenty years ago the children in Macedonian schools, trained to render the Sultan's hymn for the benefit of official visitors, were taught in secret a pathetic song, "to the honour of him, whosoever he may be, who shall be our liberator."

To-day that song has given place to ballads of achievement which tell how Delcheff or Svetkoff gave their lives in open fight for an unfurled banner.

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The Treaty of San Stefano, which closed the Russo-Turkish war, brought a momentary and elusive hope of liberty to Macedonia. If we could but dismiss the habits of thought of twenty years, see the map of the Balkans without the artificial lines which diplomacy has traced upon it, and think away the political suggestions conveyed in such purely geographical terms as "Bulgaria" and "Macedonia," there is no reason in history or in the nature of things, why these two regions should have been subjected to such different fates. In both, the population is predominantly Slavonic, and in both there is a minority of Turks and Greeks. Both took up arms to co-operate with the liberating Russian invader. Both had revolted from the Greek form of Orthodoxy and freely joined the Bulgarian Exarchist Church. When the Berlin Congress, influenced by the dread which England entertained of creating a great Bulgaria that might have been a powerful ally of Russia, ordained that Bulgaria should be freed, while Macedonia should return to Turkish rule, a reckless despair seized the abandoned population which had just seen its liberties won by blood and ratified by treaty. Their first instinct was one of protest. Two districts of the Struma valley rose in arms, seized the passes, and for some days defied the Turkish troops. At Ochrida a more ambitious conspiracy was revealed to the authorities before it had ripened. Repressions followed, but Europe had given its decision; and for more than a decade the Slavs of Macedonia endured their fate with what sullen patience they could command, cherishing the hope that Russia might some day enforce in earnest the generous programme of San Stefano. It was a period of much suffering, in which progress was slow and painful. The Greeks were active and hostile, persecuting any teacher who dared to propagate the Bulgarian language, and opposing the extension of the "schismatic" Bulgarian Church with the familiar weapons of bribery and denunciation.

But for all these obstacles the Bulgarian movement steadily advanced. The policy of the Exarchist Church was patient and cautious. It aimed at solving the problem not by revolution but by a slow process of education and consolidation. The schools were its most effective machinery. They trained a generation which could not be contented with servitude under an Asiatic tyranny, and the young men who had graduated in the secondary colleges at Monastir, Uskub, and Salonica felt themselves the equals of the Greeks. For Bulgaria (to which Eastern Roumelia was soon added) exercised an irresistible attraction over the imagination of the Macedonian Slavs as they watched first her victory over Servia and then her rapid material progress. There came a time when the younger generation felt that the methods of the priest and the schoolmaster were too slow, that they had achieved as much by peaceful propaganda as they could hope to gain, and that their ultimate liberation could come only from an armed movement which would compel the intervention of Europe. There were precedents enough to support their reasoning. It was in 1893 that a group of influential Macedonian Bulgarians, who held these views, met together in a certain house in Resna, and founded the "Internal Organisation." Two of these men are still the leaders of the movement—Damian Groueff, a teacher in Salonica who abandoned an assured career and a comfortable income to become an outlaw and a conspirator, and Christo Tatarcheff, formerly a doctor in Salonica, whose polished manners and knowledge of the world have made him the diplomat of the Committee, delegated to direct its activities in Sofia. It is characteristic of the Bulgarian character that the Committee laid its plans not for an immediate insurrection, which must have failed, but for a long period of organisation and preparation. The aspiration for liberty existed. The tradition of resistance spoke through the ballads that told of the achievements of the Heiducks—the robber patriots of the Balkans. The stupidest peasant sighed for a life of quiet and the departure of the Turks. But the means, the courage, the instinct for mutual help, had

first to be trained. The leaders had to inspire the peasants with the same courage and faith which the schools of the Exarchate had already created in the minds of the educated class. They had to weld the isolated Macedonian villages, which regard the districts beyond their own valley as a foreign land, into a conscious nation. A whole tradition of servitude had first to be combated, and to men who cowered at the sight of a Turk, and submitted without protest to the cudgel and the bastinado, it was necessary to preach the right of revolt and the duty of resistance. "Better an end with horrors than horrors without an end," was the epigram in which Groueff summed up the teaching of the Committee, and it sank deeply into the mind of Macedonia. Funds had to be accumulated for the eventual conflict, leaders chosen, and the young men inured to obedience and to discipline, rifles smuggled into the country, and men trained to use them. Finally, there was opposition to be faced from the hierarchy of the Bulgarian Church, who feared that this dangerous organisation must compromise their slow and legal work, while even within the villages, the wealthier peasants, accustomed to regard themselves as the delegates of the Turkish authorities, were usually timid and sometimes hostile.<sup>1</sup> In this way the movement became democratic as well as revolutionary. The Bulgars are not a speculative race. I have never met even among their leaders the type of thinker and theorist whom one encounters so often among

<sup>1</sup> The structure of rural society in the village communities is decidedly plutocratic. Certain powers are vested in a committee of elders (*Asas*), with a salaried headman (*Khodjabashi* or *Mouktar*) at their head. They are in a general way responsible to the Turks for all that happens in the village. Their consent is necessary if the place is to change its "religion"—i.e., to become Greek or Bulgarian. They prepare the lists for taxation, and their seals are necessary for passports. Their authority is therefore considerable, and they have it in their power to exercise a good deal of petty oppression and to make their little harvests of corruption. They are not necessarily or usually the natural leaders of a village. There is for the office of elder or headman a property qualification, based on the amount of real estate which each peasant owns, and the *asas* form accordingly a little coterie of the relatively wealthy and comfortable men in every village, the "haves" whom the Turks thought they could trust to manage the "have-nots."

Russian exiles—perhaps they are hardly as yet at that level of culture. But in a practical and quite clear-sighted way they did become a real people's party. Their decisions are taken by general conferences, which contrive in some mysterious way to meet once or twice a year in the very heart of Macedonia. Their leaders are elected, from the president of the whole organisation down to the chiefs of each village band. They have known how to bend the Bishops to their will, and in the corrupt little world of the village communities, where the wealthier peasants rule with the support of the Turks, they have fostered a very wholesome spirit of criticism and opposition. Year by year the Committee became more and more a genuinely national organisation. It knew how to use enthusiasm and to inspire the young. It had its songs and its heroes. At Uskub the lads in the upper classes of the secondary school have been known to march through the streets of the town under the eyes of the Turks, chanting their ballads of revolt for all to hear. But this reckless spirit of youth and self-sacrifice was guided by older heads. The organisation included the cautious peasant with his habit of compromise and guile, the wealthy merchant of the towns, and the educated professional man, as well as these younger and hotter heads. Discipline and organisation were its chief ends for many a long year of waiting, and patience amid fallacious hopes and alarming persecutions was its typical virtue. Enthusiasm it possessed, like all revolutionary movements, but its passion for method and detail were even more remarkable. It had its correspondents in every centre, its couriers, its treasurers, its experts for explosives, its medical service, its hired agents among the Turks, its archives, and its official records.<sup>1</sup> There is a Macedonian fable which tells how the several races of Turkey came to God for gifts. The Turks came first and

<sup>1</sup> See for an embodiment of its spirit the very competent report published in November, 1904, at Sofia in French, *La Macédoine et le Vilayet d'Adrinople* (1893-1903), a record remarkable for its method, its accuracy, and its modesty. It is, of course, an *ex parte* statement, but there is so little exaggeration that it forms a valuable historical document.



received the boon of sovereignty. The Greeks, hearing what had happened, hurried to heaven and complained, "O God! What is this intrigue of yours against us? Give us also power." And God answered, "Sovereignty is already allotted. But you shall have the gift of intrigue." Then came the Bulgars with the same petition, "O God! What is this work of yours? Give us also power." But God gave them the gift of work.

While the Committee was a secret society within the borders of Macedonia, in free Bulgaria it established itself openly as a political organisation. There is in Bulgaria an immense population of Macedonian origin which has taken root in the principality. It numbers perhaps as many as two hundred thousand persons, and it forms half the population of Sofia. These Macedonian emigrants are naturally the elect of their race, the men whose enterprise and education made life under Turkish conditions intolerable to them. Some fled at various epochs to escape persecution in Turkey, others who had come to Bulgaria for education, found that there was no career open to them in their native places, others again are migratory labourers who discovered that they could make a better income in Bulgaria than at home. In addition to this permanent Macedonian colony in Bulgaria, there are the wandering immigrants, carpenters, masons, and harvesters, who come to spend a few months or a few years in quest of work and wages. The Committee naturally made the most of the opportunities which it possessed in Bulgaria. It found Macedonians in every service and profession—officers, priests, journalists, diplomatists, teachers, and even university professors. It formed branches of its organisation among them. It made the Macedonian question the chief political issue in Bulgaria. It has its newspapers, its deputies in the chambers, and there have even been ministers of Macedonian origin. It holds mass meetings openly and presses its claims at every election. These Macedonians, mainly men of comparative wealth, were all expected to contribute to its funds, and when money enough could not be obtained by voluntary subscription, it did not shrink from menace and violence.

It armed its active partisans, and drilled them openly. In the mountainous country on the Bulgarian side of the Macedonian frontier it formed its stores of ammunition, and massed the bands which were destined to invade Turkey from time to time, either to conduct its propaganda or to wage a guerilla warfare against the Turks. It became an exceedingly dangerous State within the State, and more than once came near involving Bulgaria in war with her neighbours. But on the whole public opinion in Bulgaria, which could not be indifferent to the fate of Bulgarians over the border, was with it. Successive Governments differed in their attitude, but those which had the will to suppress it dared take no effective measures, while those which heartily sympathised were restrained by fear of the diplomatic consequences. Its leaders were occasionally placed under temporary arrest, its bands were sometimes harassed and attacked as they crossed the frontier, its organisation was even proscribed and dissolved. But against its determination, its numbers, and the approval of popular sentiment no Bulgarian Government could really destroy it. When Sarafoff was condemned to death by the Roumanian courts for organising a series of inexcusable murders in Roumanian territory, he enjoyed immunity in Bulgaria itself. When the Turks actually presented an ultimatum to the Bulgarian Government after the dynamite outrages at Salonica, the Committee, though somewhat restricted in its movements and frowned upon in official circles, none the less survived. It could not indeed be otherwise. Every man of middle age in Bulgaria remembers what it means to live under the Turkish yoke. The Macedonians are their kinsmen and their neighbours, and if they should wish to shut their eyes and repress their sympathies they are constantly met by the sight of the broken refugees of Turkish oppression, who crowd over the frontier in times of crisis and tell their tale of suffering in the common tongue. The ties of blood are no weaker in Bulgaria than elsewhere. There are differences of opinion in Bulgaria as to the best means of helping Macedonia. The parties which still draw their political inspiration from the late M. Stambuloff,

fearing that any catastrophe in the Balkans must give Russia an opportunity to interfere with no disinterested motive, urge patience and an understanding with Turkey. They make their appeal to Western Europe and renounce the idea of an active Bulgarian intervention. But in times of stress the natural instinct of the average man in Bulgaria calls loudly for war. I have never met a Bulgarian who professed to believe that Bulgaria could vanquish Turkey, but in the army the opinion that the early stages of a campaign would be favourable is very general, and it is assumed that before Turkey could recover from her first reverses the Great Powers would step in. Apart from these calculations, the feeling that Bulgaria has endured enough, spent enough, submitted too long to this nightmare at her gates is very common even among the pacific mercantile class. War, if it brought any permanent solution, would be a relief, whatever it might cost for the moment in blood and treasure. In this state of mind the Macedonian Committee<sup>1</sup> possesses a powerful ally.

Important as the activities of the Macedonian Committee have been and may again be in Bulgaria, they have never gone so far as to compromise the genuine Macedonian character of the movement. It had its origin not in Sofia, but in the little country town of Resna. It is led not by Bulgarians but by Macedonians. The Bulgarian Government is naturally able to influence its policy—it must take account of all the diplomatic factors in its problem—but as much could be said of the European Powers whose attitude it watches closely. It has never, I think, surrendered its independence to any external pressure. Indeed, there is a strong current of opinion among the leaders of the Macedonian movement which tends to be critical of, and occasionally almost hostile to, Bulgaria. The younger generation of educated Macedonian Bulgars is profoundly distrustful of Russia, whose ambition it dreads more than the decaying power of Turkey. These men can never feel quite sure of Bulgaria, where sentiment and intrigue and the proximity of the Black Sea fleet make Russian influence

<sup>1</sup> See note at end of chapter.

powerful. It is true that the Stambulofist parties in Bulgaria are at heart anti-Russian, but they can rarely afford in office to give rein to the principles which they profess in opposition. "No Government in Bulgaria is anti-Russian," as a Russian diplomatist once remarked to me. "There are only degrees of Russophilism." The Macedonians, on the other hand, have their outlook on the Ægean, and they are not at all anxious to link their fortunes with those of a principality whose ports lie exposed to the Russian navy.

It is true that without the friendly refuge of Bulgaria the Macedonian patriots could have achieved little. But the fact that their bands are often equipped in Bulgaria, and sometimes led by Macedonians long resident in Bulgaria, in no way robs the Committee of its local character. The Greek and Servian movements in Macedonia are, on the other hand, the creation of the Greek and Servian Governments, and they are directed, with very little disguise, from the Greek and Servian consulates. The unique feature of the Bulgarian Committee is that it is a democratic organisation, whose policy and programme are dictated by Macedonian opinion.

In its original idea I am ready to believe that the Macedonian Committee had no exclusive racial ambition. Its leaders were Bulgarians by race and language, but their programme has never been the annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria, and I see no reason to doubt their sincerity when they say that their aim was to create a free neutral State under the suzerainty of the Sultan, in which all the races of their distracted country might meet on a footing of equality, and conduct their common affairs without regard to national ambitions. They were not at first on the best of terms with the hierarchy of the Bulgarian Church, nor did they entirely trust the Bulgaria across the border. The Slavs of European Turkey have even yet no highly-developed consciousness of race, and what little they possess is of recent growth. Their passion is not for their race but for their country. They are a people of the soil fixed in their immemorial villages, with a limited range of sentiments which play piously around their mountains, their rivers and

their ancient churches. A nation of peasants which starts with these conservative qualities will readily develop a genuine local patriotism. And this indeed has happened despite adverse circumstances. Their ballads of revolt, in which the word "Macedonia" recurs in every chorus, prove that they have already a fatherland. If the other races of Macedonia had started with the same spiritual equipment a joint movement of revolt would have been feasible, and from this co-operation a genuine Macedonian Commonwealth would have evolved quite naturally. Macedonia is little more chaotic in its races and languages than Switzerland. But the other Macedonian stocks are not peoples of the soil. The Albanians are recent invaders. The Vlachs are nomad herdsmen, wandering carriers and cosmopolitan merchants, whose families are scattered all over the Levant. The Greeks are townsmen, reared on abstractions, who care nothing for the soil of Macedonia, and very much indeed for "Hellenism." They are, moreover, an aristocracy of talent, whose chief interest is the Church they govern, and they have ingrained an Imperial tradition which knows nothing of local patriotism. To the Slav, Macedonia is simply so much land which his ancestors have tilled for twelve centuries. To the Greek it means the country of Alexander and the hearth of a great Empire. Their "Great Idea" demands the extension of the little modern kingdom of Greece to Constantinople and the Straits, and Macedonia is essential to that ambition, because through it lies the road to the sentimental capital of Hellenism, which is not the Athens of Pericles but the Byzantium of Constantine. In the Macedonian insurgents they refuse to see peasants fighting for a minimum of liberty. To their romantic imagination these simple rebels of the villages are the vanguard of the Slav hosts, the hired agents of Russia and Panslavism, an army which is already attempting to occupy the road to Constantinople and to bar the advance of Hellenism. That is, of course, the extreme Athenian view. But Athens dominates the Greeks of Macedonia, and they follow their Bishops and their consuls with a docility which is destructive of any local opinion. Left to themselves, the Macedonian Greeks would probably

have come to terms with their Slav neighbours long ago. But just because they are the weaker element in Macedonia they do not wish to be left to themselves. It would have needed much grace to forget the secular feud, to renounce the inborn contempt of the barbarian, and to pardon the crime of the Exarchist schism. This grace the Greeks do not possess, and the Bulgarians were not sufficiently patient and tactful in their efforts at conciliation. Certainly the two peoples have never found common ground. To the Greeks who have the consciousness of race in an extravagant form, and to whom their language and their culture is dearer even than liberty, the ideal of a neutral Macedonian commonwealth presented no attractions. As little was it possible to come to terms with a view to a partition of the country, and a delimitation of spheres of influence. The inevitable result of the hostility of the Greeks was that the Macedonian movement became more and more definitely nationalist, until to-day it is as decidedly anti-Greek as it is anti-Turk. All attempts at co-operation and conciliation have long since been abandoned.

The Committee still uses in its official documents language which implies that the basis of its propaganda is not racial, and that it does not aim at a Bulgarian ascendancy. But these, I am afraid, are no more than pious memories of a better state of mind. The atmosphere of Macedonia is so poisoned with nationalism that the most enlightened patriot becomes corrupted against his will. And yet, with all these reservations, it remains true that the Committee does not desire the annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria, that its ideal, in form at least, is still an international commonwealth, and that it gives proof of its sincerity by asking Europe for a European Governor. This seems to me an important point, for if the secret intention of the Macedonian Bulgars was to obtain autonomy as Eastern Roumelia did, merely as a preliminary to a *coup d'état* and a sudden annexation to Bulgaria, they would ask not for a European Governor, but for some native Christian, who could easily be removed. Indeed, I believe that so far as the Bulgarians, whether in Macedonia or in Bulgaria,

speculate about the remote future at all, their dream is that Macedonia should be certainly a Slav, but not definitely a Bulgarian, country, and that it should eventually form the central state in a Balkan federation which might unite all the Southern Slavs.<sup>1</sup> A big Bulgaria which included Macedonia would be so overwhelmingly powerful that Serbia and Montenegro would shrink from joining her. A neutral Macedonia, on the other hand, would be a point of union which might conciliate the jarring interests of Serbia and Bulgaria, since to both it would offer access to the *Ægean*, a new commercial outlet, and a fresh window to the world.

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During the earlier years of its existence the "Internal Organisation" was a comparatively peaceful and inconspicuous society. It was occupied mainly with its moral propaganda—in preaching the doctrine of revolt, in founding on its spiritual side the idea of a Macedonian fatherland. It also busied itself with the task of arming and drilling the younger men in the villages, but as yet the moment for raising the flag of rebellion was sufficiently distant. But little by little a variety of circumstances hardly foreseen in its plan of campaign drove it to more violent and questionable methods. Its activities, in a country where the Greeks are always ready to serve as the spies of the Turks, could not remain a complete secret; and as one leader after another fell under the suspicion of the authorities, these marked men became by force of circumstances outlaws who were compelled to "take to the mountains," rifle in hand, and to live the restless, hunted life of the traditional brigand-patriots of the Balkans. Such men gathered little bands of desperate spirits about them, and naturally served as the police and the pioneers of the movement. They had nothing to fear save capture, and as long as they could

<sup>1</sup> The Committee, or some sections of it, even contemplates (1905) the policy of imposing the Macedonian Slav dialect in place of literary Bulgarian as the language of all the Exarchist schools in Macedonia. Grammars are said to have been printed for this purpose. This seems to me to prove the sincerity of the local autonomist patriotism.

escape a Turkish prison by their own wits and the loyal connivance of the sympathetic peasants, they were free to do the work of the Committee without much fear of consequences. In the anarchical interior, where the Turk is lord only of the towns, the high-roads, and the daylight, they could move freely over the mountain paths, and the remoter villages were a comparatively safe refuge. Their task was to preach rebellion, to inspire the young men with a passion for liberty and brave deeds, to punish traitors, to overawe the Greeks, to collect or to extort the funds which were to purchase arms, to exact vengeance upon individual Turks, and to train up a generation with some faith in its own right arm. As the years went on an elaborate military organisation gradually came into being. The country was mapped out into military zones, in each of which a permanent outlaw band led by a trusted leader was always under arms. It might number only from ten to twenty men, but these *cadres* were constantly changed and renewed, so that all the promising young men were expected to undergo, as it were, a period of training. Latterly when such a band found itself hard pressed, it summoned the "reserves" from the villages. The reserve was divided into several classes according to age, but this refinement existed, I fancy, only on paper, for the simple reason that there were never rifles enough for more than the younger men. Every family was expected to contribute one member to the reserve. He had to buy a rifle, or, if he were too poor, some sort of gun was found for him. Each village chose its own officer, and, as far as circumstances allowed, the reserve was drilled in preparation for the general rising which formed the end and purpose of all this elaborate organisation. In practice, I cannot believe that this drilling was serious. But a real moral preparation there certainly was, and the organisation made willing recruits, imbued with a spirit of self-sacrifice and a sense of discipline, even if it failed to train good marksmen. The only reliable troops the Committee had were the men who had served in the permanent guerilla bands. The "reserve," however, was by no means lacking in courage ;



it had the endurance of all laborious peasant races, and to convert it into a real patriotic militia nothing was wanting but experience and opportunity. Against European troops it would, of course, have been useless, but the Turkish regulars undergo no training whatever in musketry. The problem was to create a force which, however deficient it might be in the qualities of a professional soldiery, would still have cohesion enough and self-confidence enough to face the Turks. It was a moral rather than a military problem. The military results of the insurrection when it came at last in the autumn of 1903 were inconsiderable, but as a demonstration it was undoubtedly effective. A race of serfs, without military training or traditions, accustomed for five centuries to oppose nothing but a sullen patience to the insults and brutalities of its oppressors, did at length dare to meet the disciplined troops of a conquering race in the field, and to oppose to them, though outnumbered in the ratio of ten to one, a stubborn if unsuccessful resistance. That is the best evidence of the fruits of the Committee's work and the best justification for its existence. It has not yet won liberty for Macedonia in any outward or official form, but it has converted the children of slaves into men who are free at heart.

Accident has played a large part in hastening the full development of the Committee's plans. Up till the year 1897 the Turks seem hardly to have suspected its existence. Chance opened their eyes, unmasked the whole conspiracy, forced it into the open, and incidentally gave to the European world the first hint that a Macedonian question existed. Some raiders from Bulgaria robbed a Turkish landed proprietor of £800 in the village of Vinitza, not far from the Bulgarian frontier, in the province of Uskub. During the tortures and perquisitions which followed, the Turkish police came suddenly upon a hidden store of dynamite and rifles, and further inquiry revealed the work which for four years the Committee had been carrying on under the eyes of the indolent authorities. For two months a veritable reign of terror oppressed the whole province of Uskub. The search for hidden arms was

conducted in every Bulgarian village, and the Turks, seized with a madness which sprang partly from panic and partly from anger, indulged in a more than normal cruelty. Torture and violation were freely used, and it was the intellectual leaders of the people—the priests, and still more the schoolmasters—who suffered most severely. Over five hundred partisans of the Committee in the Uskub Vilayet were flung into prison, and about three hundred fled to Bulgaria.

It was a severe blow to the Internal Organisation. It terrified the peasants, it enormously enhanced the risks of propagandist work, it removed some of the best leaders of the movement, and it gave the signal for a systematic persecution of the Bulgarian schools, since it taught the Turks that in the education of the peasantry lay the chief danger to their rule. Since 1897 every Bulgarian teacher has been suspected. Those who had been educated in the principality of Bulgaria are absolutely forbidden to teach, and the rest are subjected to a system of guarantees which makes it enormously difficult to obtain any teachers at all. The years which followed witnessed a monotonous series of repetitions of the Uskub affair, and with the beginning of persecution came the plague of espionage. The Committee had to choose between the abandonment of its work and the adoption of a ruthless police system. The disloyalty of one member might involve a whole province in ruin. One affair of this kind will serve as an illustration. A native of Northern Macedonia who had killed a Turk fled to the Southern Castoria district with the avengers of blood at his heels, and posing as a martyr persuaded the villagers to harbour him. Believing him to be an outlaw, they readily admitted him to their confidence and their secrets. He was a Christian by birth, but had secretly become a convert to Islam and had accepted service as a Turkish spy. In three months he had learned all he required to know, and was able to present the authorities with a list of six hundred of the Committee's partisans. Tortures and imprisonments followed on a vast scale, and those who escaped gaol, did so only by "taking to the hills"

—a euphemism which means in the Balkans that they became open rebels. The Committee was now a frankly terroristic organisation. Exposed to the hideous perils of Turkish reprisals, it became in its turn ruthless and savage. Confronted by the open hostility of the Greeks, it took up the gauntlet and replied to espionage and intrigue by assassination and violence. It could carry on its work of organisation only by means of its peripatetic bands of outlaws, and it shrank from no means which might diminish the risks of their enterprise. Occasionally it contrived to bribe the venal Turkish authorities to connive at its proceedings. More frequently fear was its only weapon. It imposed an iron discipline upon all its partisans. Its decisions were debated freely and put to the vote, but once adopted, it was held legitimate to punish disobedience with death. A village which showed itself remiss in provisioning or concealing a band ran the risk of seeing its men beaten and its houses burned. A peasant who revealed the least of its secrets to an enemy was ruthlessly murdered. No doubt there was usually a species of trial, and often a suspected person was warned to behave with more discretion. But I am afraid that even trials and warnings offered scant security that the wild justice of revenge would be honestly used. The Balkan peasant, bred under an Asiatic despotism, has only the most elementary conception of justice and evidence, and the intimate life of the Macedonian villages breeds reckless and unscrupulous hatreds. A private enemy has only to breathe the suggestion that a certain man is a traitor, and from that hour his fate is sealed. Suspicion is in the air and fear is the one universal passion. The least eccentricity of conduct, the slightest show of independence may doom a perfectly innocent man.<sup>1</sup> In Macedonia no man will trust another

<sup>1</sup> The inevitable result has been that the Committee moves and acts as one man. Personal liberty can hardly be said to exist, and one repeatedly makes the disconcerting discovery that all one's calculations based upon the high character of some individual are overthrown by the mysterious force behind him. A man whom one would trust absolutely in any ordinary relation of life may wish to act honourably, but if the Committee behind him should feel impelled to interfere, his

whose creed or opinions differ by one hairsbreadth from his own.<sup>1</sup> It is not intolerance. It is not blood-thirstiness. It is simply the typical Macedonian disease—the paralysing fear which tyranny begets. The Committee has done much good by raising the *moral* of the peasant, but it has wrought terrible evil by organising the pervading fear into a system of oppression. But if one admits the right of rebellion one cannot eliminate violence. A revolutionary organisation has as much right as a recognised Government to punish traitors and to levy taxes by force. In both cases the sanction is the same—the interests of a national idea. It makes much difference in law but none in morality whether this national idea is recognised by neighbouring states, or whether the chiefs who are its spokesmen have a place in the *Almanach de Gotha*. If to conserve its national idea a majority may rightfully coerce an individual, it may do as much to win formal recognition for its nationality. To deny the right of a revolted race to use force is sheer cant, if one also upholds that right in a constituted nation. Only an anarchist may consistently censure.

The worst developments of the Committee's terrorism were directed against the Greeks, and by common consent the teachers and priests of both races bore the brunt of their feud. The Greeks chose to denounce the Bulgarian

personality counts for nothing. He is simply a unit which obeys. The same conditions prevail under every strenuous secret society. In Turkey the developments are worse and more glaring only because the tyranny itself is grosser, and the need for an absolute moral solidarity which obliterates private interests and overrides private scruples is also more imperative.

<sup>1</sup> We had under us in our relief work men and women of all creeds and races. I believe that all of them were absolutely loyal. But while complete confidence reigned between us and them, the wildest suspicions were at work among themselves. One man, an Albanian Protestant, who gave me every proof of a rare courage and devotion in dangerous and difficult circumstances, was the continual butt of the suspicions of our Catholic and Orthodox helpers. They were as honourable as himself. But no tale was too mad for them to believe of him. For them he was a traitor and the origin of every trouble that arose. I questioned them carefully, but they had never a tittle of evidence. It was enough that he was a reserved and difficult man—and a Protestant. Had they been insurgents they would have murdered him by a unanimous vote.

teachers and priests to the Turks as fomentors of sedition (which in fact they were). The result was that these devoted men carried their lives in their hands, and went about their work expecting torture, imprisonment, exile, or death for their wages. The Bulgarians could not retort in kind. They assassinated. The only difference was that the Greeks murdered by proxy, the Bulgarians with their own hands. The instinct of the natural man is always against the spy and the informer. But it is only fair to recognise that these Greeks in their turn were doing what they conceived to be a patriotic work. They too took their lives in their hands. They obeyed their prelates, they were applauded in Athens, they were sustained by a consciousness of patriotic motives. Both sides were the victims of a narrow nationalism. It is true that the Bulgarians were fighting for liberty, while the Greeks had allied themselves with the tyrant. Again one's instinctive sympathies speak clearly. But again one must admit that the policy of the Greeks was adopted at the dictation of a genuine if short-sighted patriotism. Both sides gave proof of courage, and both sides were guilty of reckless cruelty. A word from a Greek Bishop would often condemn a whole Bulgarian hamlet to the flames. A Bulgarian band, descending by night upon a hostile village to murder a spy-priest and to burn his house, was not always careful to save his widow and her children from the conflagration.

These acts of violence fall into several classes of different degrees of culpability. (1) The murder of spies and informers one must at once allow to be legitimate in extreme cases, if one admits that an oppressed race has any right to revolt. It can do so with success only by safeguarding its secrets and protecting the lives of its adherents. (2) Where money is involved the case is more complicated. An agent of the Committee goes to a Greek business man in Monastir, shows his credentials and demands the usual tax for the war of liberation. The Greek, who does not choose to be liberated in this way, refuses. The agent warns him, and returns a second time, and perhaps he uses threats and shows his revolver. The Greek is a man of spirit and promptly

denounces the Bulgarian to the Turks—who are, after all, the nominal custodians of public order. The Bulgarian is arrested, possibly tortured, and it may be contracts typhus in some pestilent dungeon and dies. The Greek was certainly within his rights, and deserves sympathy. But the Committee must either punish him or else abandon its system of levying contributions by force. It does not hesitate between these alternatives, and the Greek, who is now a “traitor,” is presently shot, perhaps killed. Morally it is clear that the Committee is in the wrong, and yet, after all, it can argue with some plausibility, on the low plane of Balkan morality, that the end justifies the means. The whole system of levying contributions by violence is from the standpoint of individualism nothing more or less than organised brigandage. But it would be just as fair to compare it to legal taxation. It is at all events rather better than the Turkish system which Europe tolerates. It is not more violent, and, unlike the legal taxation, it is directed to an end of which the majority of the people approve. (3) A village which is entirely Slav in race language and sympathies has long desired to join the Bulgarian Church, to worship in its own tongue, to have its children taught in a language they can understand, and to avow its political leanings openly and boldly. But the headman, the priest, and the teacher are “Greeks”—*i.e.*, they are Slavs who belong to the Greek faction. Their private interests are at stake, their self-love and perhaps their patriotism have also to be reckoned with. They oppose the official recognition of the Bulgarian nationality of the village, and they claim the ownership of the church and school which the peasants built with their own hands. The authorities support them, and until the peasants can show an official paper signed with the seal of the village, they cannot give in their collective adhesion to the Bulgarian Church. The problem then narrows itself down to seizing the seal which the headman has no sort of moral right to withhold against the wish of the villagers. He is, let us suppose, a man of some strength of character. He supports himself by appealing to the Greek Bishop, and the Greek Bishop threatens to denounce the whole village

to the Turks as seditious—*i.e.*, to have it burned or sacked, or in one of many familiar ways placed beneath the harrow. The short way out of the difficulty is to murder the headman, and the habit of the Balkans is to prefer short ways.

These are definite cases which constantly recur, and I believe that in a rough way they cover most of the Committee's acts of violence. The Greeks assert that it is nothing more or less than a league of murderers which systematically assassinates Greek teachers, priests, and notables in order to exterminate Hellenism. The Servians on their side tell a similar tale, and both races can show an appalling list of martyrs. The Bulgarian reply is that the Committee has never murdered a man merely for his Greek or Servian sympathies or even for any legitimate zeal he might display on behalf of the Greek or Servian causes. Undoubtedly a large number of the notables and pioneers of these races have been killed, but these murders, it is claimed, were all of them deliberate acts of reprisal in reply to some appeal to the Turkish authorities against the Bulgarian agitators. On the whole I think the balance of truth lies rather with the Bulgarian side of the case—though I confess that I express this opinion with hesitation—but the line between punishment and mere murder can never be accurately drawn. The indignation of the Greeks and Servians is very natural, and yet I do not see what other means of defence the Bulgarians could have adopted against their rival's policy of espionage. It is probable that the limits of mere defence have often been overstepped, but some of the responsibility for such excesses must lie with the races who provoked them. One fact which has not been sufficiently weighed tells on the Bulgarian side. During the first three weeks of the insurrection of 1903 they were the undisputed masters of the greater part of the province of Monastir. The Turks were taken by surprise, and the Greeks were entirely defenceless. And yet to the best of my knowledge no notorious instance of murderous violence occurred, although the Bulgarians actually occupied three country towns inhabited mainly by Vlachs of the Greek faction. Had the policy of the Bulgarians really been to exterminate

the Greek teachers and priests, they might, during these three weeks, have carried out a wholesale massacre with complete impunity. Their correct behaviour, while they had the power to work their will upon their enemies, seems to me a rather decisive proof that when they do resort to reprisals the-motive is not race-hatred but an instinct of self-defence.

The mischief is not merely that the Macedonians have their own standards of humanity—they are often unaware that any higher standards exist.<sup>1</sup> A Greek Bishop once fulminated to me against the Bulgarians for murdering Greek spies. I replied that in my view the worst thing they had done recently was to murder some Turkish lads whom they caught unarmed during the insurrection. He was amazed and rather shocked, and could not understand why I should consider the murder of a Moslem as a crime. I never found the peasants at all shy of admitting their excesses, and this in a sense constitutes an excuse. I once had a talk with a man who had drugged ten Turkish soldiers in an inn and then burned them alive. When I expressed my horror, he replied by pouring out a tale which I confess staggered me—all the recent wrongs of his village—the men carried away captive into slavery by brigands, the women forced to appear in this same inn and to dance naked for the amusement of passing soldiers. Somehow my vocabulary of censure ran dry, and I tried to suggest that such reprisals were a mistake, since they alienate the sympathies of Europe. He replied that by murdering ten men who richly deserved it, he had obtained ten rifles for the cause of liberty. "Surely," I answered, "the good opinion of the civilised world is worth more than ten rifles?" He smiled bitterly, reflected for a moment and then, mimicking my tones, inquired laconically, "What was the good opinion of your civilised world worth to the Armenians?" I was silenced. "Judge not that ye be not judged" is a golden

<sup>1</sup> A village once came mysteriously to us and asked us to direct the Relief Society's doctor to make up a strong poison. It proposed to invite its local traitors to a banquet. Clearly it had no idea that we might disapprove.



rule in Macedonia. We too are weighed in "the balance of criminality."

\* \* \* \* \*

Late in the autumn of 1902 General Tzoncheff, acting in the name of the "Central" Committee,<sup>1</sup> which is little more than a Bulgarian organisation with few roots in Macedonia itself, proclaimed a general rising. He can hardly have hoped for any real response to his appeal, for winter warfare is against the traditions of the Balkans. It was indeed a bold defiance of the climate, but it could do no harm to the Turks. General Tzoncheff crossed the frontier in November with about four hundred men, and in the region of Djumaia and Raslog, which adjoins the Bulgarian boundary, he carried on a gallant guerilla campaign for some three or four weeks. About two hundred men from the locality joined him, but the rival Internal Organisation opposed his enterprise, and there was no general rising, even in the very limited district which he invaded. By December all fighting was at an end. General Tzoncheff and his band returned to Bulgaria, and the peasants, who had taken little part in his adventure, were left to bear the brunt of the Turkish vengeance. There is much conflict of evidence as to what followed. The Russian official account is one long record of barbarities and tortures. The English Blue-Book is sceptical—perhaps unduly so. But certainly there was wholesale beating, some torture, some violation of women, and some burning of houses. The terror was, at all events, general enough and serious enough to drive as many as three thousand peasants, in all the rigour of a Balkan winter, across the mountains of the frontier into the kindly refuge of Bulgaria. Although the Internal Organisation had no share in these events, and even tried to frustrate General Tzoncheff's wild enterprise, the Turks made no nice distinctions, and all over Macedonia the burden of the Turkish yoke grew heavier. Villages were searched for arms, which means that the peasants were beaten and tortured until they produced them, and if they really possessed no rifle they were often constrained

<sup>1</sup> See note at end of chapter.

to buy one in order to surrender it to the Turks. But this episode had one salutary result. It reminded Europe once more of the Macedonian Question, which had been forgotten since the repression of 1897, and diplomacy began to occupy itself with the question of reforms. The Western Governments were comparatively indifferent and took the fatal step of allowing Russia and Austria, as the two interested Powers, to manage the crisis as they pleased. The Sultan meanwhile was determined to anticipate the intervention of Europe, and in December, 1902, he drew up a scheme of reforms of his own, in which the only important item was that Hussein Hilmi Pasha was appointed Inspector-General of the Three Vilayets (Uskub, Salonica, and Monastir). In February Austria and Russia published their first Reform Scheme, which was destined to remain a dead letter (see Chapter IX. pp. 304-305). Its sole effect upon the situation was to convince the Bulgarians that Europe would do nothing without some powerful stimulus, some bloody and sensational object-lesson, which would convince her that the misgovernment of Macedonia is an evil which calls for a drastic remedy. But what form should that object-lesson take? The Macedonians knew to their cost that it is useless to talk about the normal misrule under which they suffer. Petitions, deputations, notes of protest and appeal from the friendly Bulgarian Government attract no attention whatever. Partial revolts and brutal repressions result in nothing more than futile remonstrance and feeble counsels of reform. Europe acts with energy only when the lives and property of her own subjects are endangered. Then indeed the ironclads move, and the spectacle of cleared decks induces the Sultan to yield to superior force. The younger men among the Macedonian Extremists were full of this idea, and wild plans for attacking the railways and the consulates were in the air. It was thought that if the insurgents could create a state of anarchy dangerous to European capital the Concert would intervene. The Internal Organisation as a whole rejected this scheme, but there was a small group of Extremists<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I came to know one of these men rather intimately, and a more pathetic and incongruous character I have never met. He was a

who were determined to defy its discipline and to give this plan a trial. They concentrated their efforts upon a plan to blow up the Ottoman Bank at Salonica, a large and pretentious building in which a European manager and his family resided, and which formed the centre of European trade in the port. They worked steadily and secretly though I think many of the Bulgarians of the town were aware of their plot. They opened a little grocer's shop beside the bank and mined laboriously, carrying away the earth from their tunnel in paper bags and parcels. It is

Macedonian from Resna, educated in Bulgaria, a schoolmaster by profession, and twenty-three years of age. His appointed task was to blow up a certain mosque on a given Friday in order to excite the fanaticism of the Turks and to make a massacre inevitable. He was arrested before he could put it into execution, imprisoned for some months, and then released. There was no evidence against him, and the Turks did not know what his plan really was. In the gaol at Monastir, where he slept on stones and lived on bread and water, his health was ruined and he contracted a galloping consumption. I found him living on charity in a very miserable state, and the Relief Society's doctor did what was possible to make his end easier. I had many a talk with him, and though his scheme has always seemed to me merely diabolical, he was personally one of the gentlest and most attractive characters that I met in Macedonia. His parents were peasants, but his mind and his manners were refined. He was intelligent and well-read, considering his youth and his scanty opportunities. His solace during the long days when he lay dying with a clear mind was to read incessantly, and his relaxation to gaze from his window upon the beauty of Ochrida Lake. The thought that he had left certain books unread seemed to make him more uneasy than any physical discomfort, and he would have us search Macedonia for a translation of Sir Walter Scott, for one or two romances of Dumas the Elder, and—of all books in the world—for *Bel Ami*! But when he talked, his anxiety was always to hear political news. Patriotism was with him a consuming fever, and certain words—Liberty, Independence, and the like—would bring the fire to his eyes and a resonance to his hollow voice. His gentleness and resignation made devoted friends of two or three poor townsfolk who visited him. It was with a constant shock that one realised that this kindly and sensitive nature, with its capacity for sympathy and its half-developed æsthetic tastes, could have been capable of the bloody act of criminal heroism for which he had vowed to sacrifice his life. He was under the dominion of certain abstract ideas, which obsessed him and paralysed his own natural instincts. His generous and enthusiastic temperament had brooded on the shame of slavery, the allurements of freedom, the glory that might await his liberated race, until no other thoughts were left in the patchwork of his mind—half tillage, half desert. If he was typical of the Macedonian "terrorists" they merit rather pitiful sympathy than angry censure.

said that the Internal Organisation, hearing what was afoot, ordered them to desist and sentenced them to death when they continued their work, so that they were compelled to strike their blow prematurely. The Turks had been warned of what was going on, but nothing would induce them to interfere, and the inference is either that they were bribed or that they were clear-headed enough and Machiavellian enough to allow the Bulgarians to discredit themselves in the eyes of Europe unmolested. The bank in due course (April, 1903) was blown up with complete success, all Salonica was plunged into panic, and bombs were also thrown, though without much effect, at the railway station, the *Kouak*, the German School, and a European hotel. A French steamship in the bay was completely wrecked. Most of the terrorists were killed, either in resisting arrest or by their own bombs, and a massacre of the Christians of the town was only averted by the belated energy of the old *Vali*, who exposed himself fearlessly and managed to control and utilise his troops before the mob had done more than sixty Christians to death. These outrages had a disastrous effect upon the Macedonian Movement. Public opinion in Europe was shocked, and only two or three of its more thoughtful leaders, like M. de Pressensé and M. Bérard, had the insight to see that this cruel and desperate act, which, after all, required courage and devotion, was really a grim commentary upon the indifference of Europe. If we care nothing for the daily sufferings of the Macedonians, if neither petitions nor Blue-Books nor the evidence of travellers will impress the facts upon our imagination, if we have forgotten our own pledges and the remedies we prescribed at Berlin, who is to blame if the abandoned victims of Turkish tyranny take strange means to jog our memories? If we would listen neither to persuasion nor to cries, these young Macedonians were determined that we should hear dynamite. Our own deafness is as guilty as their violence. But the comfortable and the uninformed did not reason on these lines. Perhaps the outrage was not really serious enough to alarm them. At all events only a few ironclads came to Salonica, and

their mission was naturally not to coerce the Turks, but simply to protect the lives and property of the European colony. The Turks, moreover, had the sense in the main to confine their protests and repression to legal means. They presented an ultimatum to Bulgaria, which they withdrew immediately under the pressure of Europe. For the rest they contented themselves with stamping out the insurrectionary movement within Macedonia itself. There was no such massacre as the "anarchist" group expected to provoke, nothing but a round of minor cruelties and uninteresting oppressions—nothing, in short, which could attract the attention of Europe or stir its sluggish pity. Once only did the Moslem mob break bounds—at Monastir on St. George's Day (Old Style), and even then the number of victims was not considerable.<sup>1</sup>

The measures which Hilmi Pasha adopted to suppress the Macedonian Committee were drastic and wholesale, but none the less ineffective; indeed, they overreached themselves by their excessive severity. If the Turks could have contented themselves with hunting down the bands (a thing they hardly attempted), and arresting the prime movers of the agitation, they might have achieved their end. But when they proposed to banish the ringleaders, Russia stood in the way, whereas they were allowed to carry out their useless and provocative measures against the mass of the population, with the result that the Bulgarians were driven to desperation, and revolted in self-defence. Everywhere, alike in the towns and in the villages, the notables of the Bulgarian communities were thrown into prison—not by twos and threes, but by twenties and thirties. Rich

<sup>1</sup> The Moslems were anxious to find a pretext for avenging the Salonica outrage. A rumour got about that the Bulgarians were going to blow up a mosque, and a trivial quarrel between a Turk and a Bulgarian in the market-place gave the signal for slaughter. Armed bands of Turkish civilians, tolerated, and sometimes aided, by the police, patrolled the streets for the best part of two days. As it began on a feast day most of the Christians were within doors, and not many more than thirty were killed, though others were beaten and maltreated. The *Vali* posted troops somewhat tardily, but none of the murderers were punished. The attack was quite unprovoked, and Greeks suffered as well as Bulgarians.

and poor, merchants from the cities, and lads from the upper classes of the secondary schools, were herded together in the Turkish gaols. The schools were all closed, sometimes by order, sometimes because they had been turned into barracks for the troops, sometimes because the teachers had either been arrested or had fled to escape arrest. The very few Bulgarian doctors and lawyers who manage to exist in Macedonia—one could almost count them on one's fingers, so dangerous is it to be possessed of education—were also imprisoned. Business was at a standstill, and the very Jews in Salonica were crying out because there were no Christian merchants left with whom they might do business. The cities were in a state of siege. Military patrols tramped the streets at all hours, and bivouacked outside the principal buildings. The townsfolk were forbidden to stir abroad after sundown, and if urgent need arose for a doctor, he could be summoned only by bribing a soldier or policeman to fetch him. In the larger villages and the country towns where no consuls or Europeans reside the case was still worse. The entire male Moslem population of military age had been called to the colours, reinforced by the ragged regiments of Asia Minor and the defiant, undisciplined levies of Albania. These troops were quartered in the villages and the smaller towns, and they naturally vented their anger at being called away from their fields upon the Bulgarian inhabitants. The reserves of the third class (*Ilaveh*, *i.e.*, *Landsturm*) had the worst reputation. They were all unpaid, and frequently received no rations; indeed, when I was in Monastir the army contractors had been so long unpaid that they refused to supply even bread upon credit. The result was that the troops had no choice but to live upon the peasants. One met them strolling about the streets adorned with all manner of looted garments, sometimes wearing socks which they had stolen from the women, and sometimes carrying sheepskin coats over their shabby uniforms. Their chief occupation was to search for arms, and as a Turk is always too lazy to look for concealed weapons, they took the simpler and shorter course of torturing or beating the villagers—men, women, and

children—in order to force them to reveal the hiding-places of the weapons they were supposed to possess. What all this meant in physical pain, in material loss, and in the dishonour of the women, the imagination can hardly conceive, for scarcely a village went free. I was in one rural centre, Doiran, during the height of the persecution. It is a tiny town on the borders of a lake among purple mountains, the centre of a region so beautiful that one left the fields for its narrow streets, reluctant and afraid, knowing well the human misery that lay concealed behind the white walls and red tiles which glittered in the sunshine. I remember arriving at ten o'clock in the morning to find that the Turkish authorities were still asleep, while the Albanian levies in the town were very much awake, and drunk, with rifles in their hands. Despite the risk from spies (half the place was "Greek" in its politics, though not a word of Greek was ever spoken) the women had no sooner heard that Europeans had come to the town than they began to crowd our inn, filing through in groups, each with its miserable tale to tell. They were all in tears, demoralised as much by what might happen as by what had actually taken place; for rumour was always ready to assert that a massacre had occurred in some neighbouring town, or that this Christian village or the other had been burned to the ground, and Doiran expected that its turn would come next. But the women were mainly concerned for the fate of husbands, sons, brothers, arrested on suspicion and detained without trial. There were sixty political suspects in Doiran gaol, and others had been drafted to Salonica, while a few had been released. These latter had harrowing tales to tell of the cruelties which went on night by night within the gaol. One young lad had been liberated, with lame and shapeless feet, after a merciless bastinado. Others, he said, had fared worse than he, and there were eye-witnesses to testify that some at least of these prisoners had been forced at the bayonet-point to walk up and down the corridor of the prison night after night, in the hope that the madness which comes to a man deprived of sleep would induce

them to reveal some guilty conspirator's secret. Another prisoner had been forced to stand hour after hour with his hands raised above his head. There was no prospect of mercy or redress. The women could only weep and tell their story, and we could only promise to report the facts to one of the consuls. When the matter was at length brought to Hilmi Pasha's notice he telegraphed promptly to the prefect (*Caimakam*) of Doiran in something like these terms: "It is said that you are torturing your Bulgarian prisoners. Is this true? If so, a Commission will be sent to investigate your responsibility." Naturally the man replied with a stout denial, and Hilmi Pasha, satisfied that he had done his duty, showed the two telegrams in triumph to the consul.

Other measures of repression even more disastrous were lightly undertaken. The gaols would not hold all the Bulgarians of Macedonia, and so the order went forth that every man of peasant origin in the towns must return to his native village and stay there. For fear of outrage or disturbance, the thousands of Macedonian Bulgarians who repair year by year to Constantinople to earn a little competence were ruthlessly expelled, and driven back to their homes. The migratory masons and carpenters who inhabit such villages as Smilovo and Smerdesh in winter, and spend the summer wandering about in quest of work, were also interned in their homes during the only season when their work was possible. Of all the means which could have been devised to provoke a rebellion this was the most efficacious, for all these thousands of able-bodied men, the most energetic and intelligent section of the population, were deprived of subsistence and occupation, and left in idleness and anger to concert their revenge. Finally, thanks mainly to the brutality of the soldiery, who also had a grievance, since they were haled from their lands just as the season of harvest was approaching, the normal insecurity of the roads became so intolerable that even the peasants rarely cared to quit their villages. Murders, sometimes with a motive, sometimes at the prompting of mere wanton brutality, were everywhere of daily occurrence, and



the murder-books, grim catalogues which are kept in every bishopric and consulate—the only original literature which Macedonia produces—had their blank pages rapidly filled. For this violence the Turks were only partly to blame. Encouraged by the obvious intention of the authorities to bring the Bulgarians under the harrow, the Greeks betook themselves with redoubled zeal to the work of espionage, and they paid the price in blood. Moreover, it was the policy of the Committee to reply to violence with violence. The Turks of Monastir punished the Christians of the town by an attempted massacre as a reply to what had happened in Salonica, and the Bulgarians in the villages round Monastir exacted retribution by murdering local Moslems. The result of this competition in bloodshed and injustice was a nightmare of terror in which the whole normal life of Macedonia stood petrified and fear-bound. Within the space of ten days in the month of May I visited three market-towns on market-day—Monastir, Doiran, and Küprili—to find the market-place deserted and silent. The merchants were in prison, and the peasants dared not quit their homes; indeed, where their fields lay at any distance from the hamlet even tillage was suspended. The plague would have wrought less havoc than this legal and regular persecution, which Hilmi Pasha directed in the intervals of reforming Macedonia.

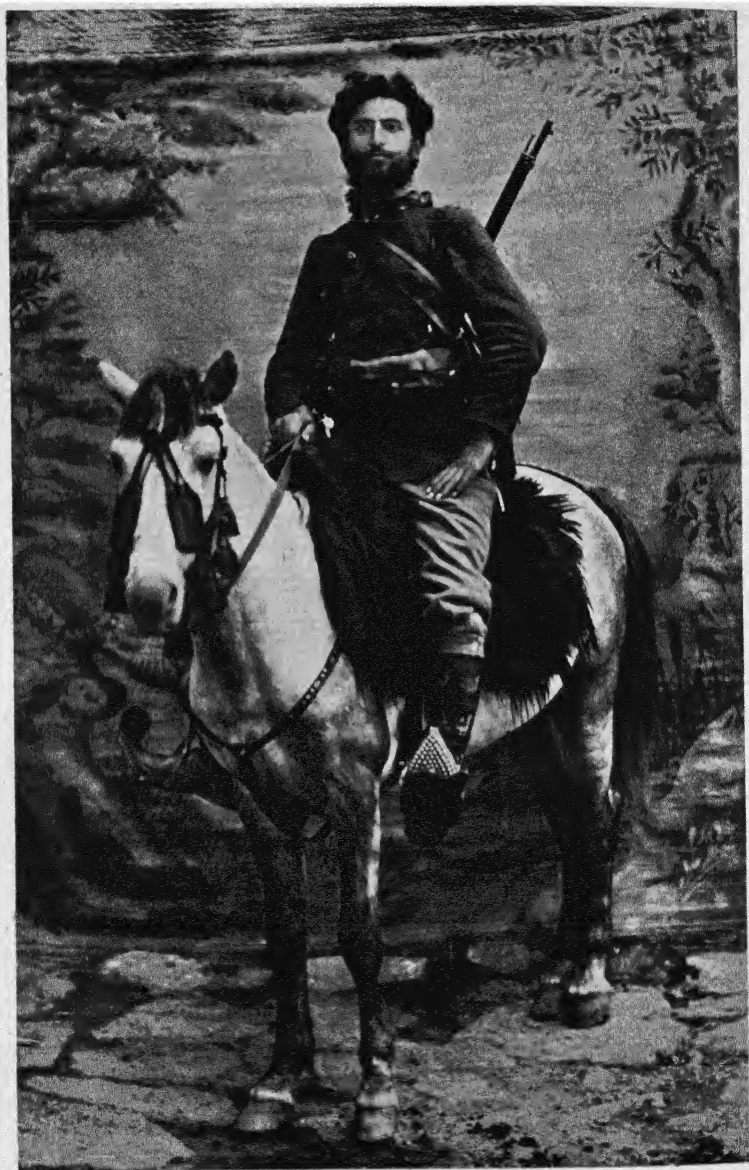
Meanwhile the bands, constantly recruited from the vast army of outlaws and suspects, were not idle, though as yet they did not willingly assume the aggressive. Wherever the troops came up with them a bloody stain was left upon the countryside, and it was rather the peasants than the insurgents who suffered. I came upon the village of Mogilla (about eight miles from Monastir) one afternoon, just as the troops were leaving it after one of these affairs. They straggled along, a disorganised herd, without officers and carrying the trifling spoils which they had been able to glean in the miserable hamlet which lay smoking behind them. A little band of outlaws under a gallant young leader named Svetkoff, once a teacher of music in the Monastir High School, had been trapped in some isolated mud cabins

just outside the village. The police were searching for hidden arms, and when they came to these houses they were received with a volley. Troops were hurried up with cannon, and a regular siege was laid to these flimsy huts. Through an afternoon and a night the Bulgarians held out, firing whenever a foe showed himself above the mud walls which enclosed their little fortress. In the intervals of fighting, so the Turks told us, they danced a grim step to the tune of some ballad of revolt, shouting all the while their defiance of the slaves who besieged them, their contempt for the Sultan, and their readiness to die free men. They could have had no doubt about their fate, for the wall left no way of escape, and the Turks behind it were firing comfortably through loop-holes. The end came before dawn, when a shot from the mountain guns set the poor fortress of the outlaws ablaze. At the same time the Turks set on fire seventeen houses of the village to serve them as lamps for their marksmanship—one thinks of Nero's Christian torches. One by one, as they dashed out, the survivors of the little band were shot down within the enclosure. When I arrived the ground was still blood-stained. The mud walls still smouldered and glowed; a stork looked vainly for her accustomed roof from a perch on a crumbling gable, and the air was charged with the stench of burning flesh. In the churchyard the last scene of the tragedy was going forward. The villagers were burying the contents of two great carts—corpses heaped in a mass of charred and dishonoured flesh. There were eleven dead insurgents, their bodies stripped and mutilated by their savage and unchivalrous enemies, four innocent peasants of the village and two young women shot while the search for arms went forward. Among the weeping crowd of village mothers and widows stood two little girls, who had been wantonly wounded. The priest of the place, a frail old man, lay speechless and paralysed on a heap of straw at the point of death, and the peasants were carrying the dead rebels to their last trenches, without service or prayer. It was a scene of misery and moral squalor. The homeless families wept for their burned

hovels, and the bereaved peasants for their dead relatives with the piercing animal grief of the East. But at the time I fancied they had few thoughts to spare for the insurgents who had fallen in their cause. The scene seemed to teach how little life is worth in the Balkans. It is neither revered nor valued, and if a bullet ends it—why, then, it only ends a long series of miseries and oppressions, cuts short a few years of fruitless toil and petty sufferings that have not even the halo of heroism to redeem them. Six months later I heard this same fight recounted in a popular ballad, and realised that poor Svetkoff, whose handsome form I had seen tossed like so much rubbish into the pit, had become an immortal name, inscribed in the calendar of freedom. The Bulgarians hide their sentiment and conceal their deeper emotions, while they jostle sacred things with common spades. The sequel was easy to guess. Here were seventeen homeless families, which included nigh thirty able-bodied men. Their only hope now was to join a roving band. It was safer on the whole to be in the mountains with a rifle on one's back than to cringe in a village outwardly loyal. It was not difficult to imagine how these men from Mogilla would fight. They carried with them the picture of murdered wives and wounded daughters, of smoking homesteads and the charred bodies of comrades. They would neither spare themselves nor pity others, their dim minds ruled by no better law than vengeance. And that also is part of their misery. Outrage begets outrage, and each race demoralises its foes.

In the same week of May an incident on a much more horrible scale occurred at Smerdesh, a big village of over 2,000 inhabitants which lies on the main road from Castoria to Florina. It is a gloomy and forbidding place, built of stone upon a gaunt hillside in a narrow valley where the sun shines for no more than three hours in a day. There is little tillage and but scanty pasture around it, but the peasants none the less are wealthy and enterprising, itinerant masons for the most part, who ply their trade all over the Levant, and invest some part of their savings in substantial and roomy houses. It had a great church with carved





TCHAKALÁROFF, COMMANDER OF THE SOUTHERN INSURGENT CORPS,  
TAKEN DURING THE OCCUPATION OF KLISSOURA, 1903

pillars, of which it was inordinately proud, and a large school. It is the native place of Tchakalároff, the cruel but competent general of the Southern insurgents, and among the village families his relatives form a sort of aristocracy. The Turks had long feared and suspected Smerdesh. Tchakalároff often visited it, and few Turks ever ventured to approach it. There had been a skirmish near it during April, and a punitive expedition which started out to subdue the place had marched back without daring to enter it. Nothing further occurred for some five weeks, and then suddenly a large force of regulars under one Haireddin Bimbashi (major), accompanied by a swarm of *bashi-bazouks*,<sup>1</sup> came marching up the road from Castoria, towards sundown on the evening of May the 21st.<sup>2</sup> This man is a semi-civilised person of handsome presence and polished manners, who studied in Paris, and had been professor of French in the Military Academy of Monastir. He also it was who commanded the troops at Armensko, where the worst excesses of the insurrectionary period were perpetrated. It was long a puzzle to me why Smerdesh, which had given no overt provocation, whatever Tchakalároff may have done, should have been signalled out for a horrible punishment. The explanation was, I am told, that Haireddin Bimbashi had arranged with the *bashi-bazouks* that by way of payment for the license he allowed them, he should receive a substantial proportion of the proceeds of the sale of the loot. Once again it turns out that greed lies at the root of Turkish oppression. It was, I think, the worst case of its kind in Macedonia. For there was no fight, no resistance, no parley, no summons to surrender.

The people of Smerdesh, seeing the Turkish force

<sup>1</sup> The word *bashi-bazouk* means simply "civilian," and in this context denotes a Moslem villager who took up his rifle to assist the troops.

<sup>2</sup> I obtained full details of this affair during two nights passed in Smerdesh in the winter. On the first occasion a Turkish officer was with me, but the men told their tale fearlessly in his presence. On the second occasion I was alone, and they talked with entire freedom. I also heard some curious details from certain Turks who disapproved of Haireddin Bimbashi's performances. Him also I had the misfortune to meet socially.

approach, and having no means of defence—for there was no insurgent band either in or near the village on that day<sup>1</sup>—sent a deputation to make their submission and to ask for considerate treatment. The deputation was met half-way by a volley of musketry, and returned to report its failure. The guns were then brought up, the village surrounded and subjected, during the night, to a heavy cannonade. A few houses were set on fire in this way. Two hours after dawn the troops and the *bashi-bazouks* rushed in, and set to work to pillage and burn methodically with the aid of petroleum. The troops were withdrawn before noon, and the *bashi-bazouks* left in possession for two whole days. One hundred and sixty-six houses were reduced to ashes, and nothing but a solid beam, a comfortable hearthstone, or a stone which gives a name and a date remains to commemorate what once were homes. The great church is a mere roofless shell, and the school a heap of rubbish. The majority of the inhabitants contrived somehow to escape in the darkness, before the investing cordon was completely formed—it is said also that they had subterranean shelters. About one hundred and thirty who remained were massacred; over fifty were wounded, and many women and girls are said to have been outraged. One heard pitiable stories of villagers who hid themselves to escape the soldiers, only to perish in the flames. One old priest pretended to be dead, and some ruffian flung a great stone upon him. Another priest bought his life from one marauder only to be caught empty-handed and murdered by the next. Most of the wounds were inflicted at close quarters with steel, and one heard tales which sounded authentic about bed-ridden women too weak to flee who expired under the lust of the soldiers. About sixty houses escaped the conflagration, naked and stripped, and in them the once prosperous village, proud of its wealth, its industry, and its education, found shelter through the following winter. It had no

<sup>1</sup> I am not absolutely sure of this. Some accounts say that about twenty insurgents were present, who may have fired. But this the villagers stoutly and unanimously denied. At all events even if a few shots were fired, there was no prolonged or general resistance.

capital with which to rebuild, and no leisure or opportunity to work. For it was still a mark for the hostility of Greeks and Turks, and through the greater part of the year the Greek Bishop of Castoria, who had been appointed a sort of trustee for the village after the catastrophe, refused to grant passports to the Exarchist inhabitants who sought permission to go abroad in search of work. They had arranged a little chapel in a shed, to take the place of their ruined church. On the walls they had hung little water-colour sketches of Christ and the Madonna to serve instead of the valuable *eikons* they had lost. On a day when I visited the place a column of troops had just left the village, and the marks of their bayonets were visible upon the poor little pictures of this improvised shrine.

Shortly after these incidents at Mogilla and Smêrdesh the Insurgent Convention met and deliberated on their position. They were not prepared for a general rising. They had neither money nor arms nor ammunition enough. But they could not afford to submit to a repression so overwhelming and so brutal without striking some blow in return. To have lain idle under such provocation would have meant the collapse of the propaganda, and the loss of all the fruits of their ten years of steady work. They had indeed given the first provocation, if they are to be held responsible for the acts of the desperate youths who blew up the bank at Salonica. But the Turks were no longer punishing. Their aim was to crush the Bulgarian race in Macedonia. The schools, the churches, and the commerce of the Bulgarians as well as their political organisation were in peril. Europe was indifferent, and unless they were prepared to succumb, they had no choice but to save themselves. They decided to proclaim a general rising after the harvest. It was, under all the circumstances, a war of self-defence. For a brief period the guerilla bands were inactive, and on the night of the 2nd of August, 1903, the supreme moment arrived. But even in this desperate situation the Bulgarians showed their habitual prudence. They knew that they might fail. They knew that further efforts might be necessary. They knew also that the



districts which revolted would be so utterly devastated that they would be incapable of further revolt for many years to come. It was accordingly decided that only the province of Monastir should be called upon to rise, and even there certain districts were exempted (notably Perlepe and Morihovo). Several motives dictated the choice of Monastir. The country is mountainous and suitable for guerilla warfare. The peasants are resolute and well organised. Since Monastir does not adjoin the Bulgarian frontier, it would be obvious to Europe that the movement was a genuine Macedonian revolt, and not a mere invasion organised in the Principality. Finally, a revolt under the direction of the Committee in this southern province claimed by the Greeks would serve to advertise the fact that the rural population is not Hellenic but Bulgarian.

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The moment for which the Bulgarian population had been preparing for ten years arrived on the festival of the Prophet Elias—the evening of Sunday, August the 2nd, 1903. The Turks and even the Europeans in Macedonia were taken by surprise. No one believed that a peasantry, to all appearance so crushed and brutalised, was really capable of a serious military demonstration on a scale which entitles it to the name of a general rising. It is true there were rumours of what was coming. The peasants, when one talked of the future, would shake their heads and say wisely, "After the harvest you will see." But Macedonia is so used to threats and rumours that no one was seriously alarmed. Moreover, the relative calm which reigned throughout June and July had deceived the Turks, as it was intended to do. They still had some thought of making war on Bulgaria, and they were still concerned about the possibility of a fresh Albanian movement, and the result was that the greater part of their formidable army was grouped in the northern districts. In Monastir they had no more than fifteen thousand men, and these were scattered along the railway and throughout the interior. The chief command, moreover, belonged to Omer Ruchdi Pasha, an elderly and old-fashioned soldier, whose vacilla-



AN INSURGENT BAND IN THE RISING OF 1903



tion and incapacity still further aggravated the consequences of the surprise which the Committee had organised.

The signal was given by the burning of some haystacks just outside the town of Monastir. The revolt was proclaimed, and the banners blessed in the village churches, and before the short summer night was over the beacons had raised the whole of the highlands which stretch westward to Ochrida, northward to Dibra, and southwards to Castoria and Klissoura. The plan of campaign had been carefully thought out in advance. For years the country had been divided into military zones, each with its permanent *cadre* of seasoned guerillas, and each with its recognised chief. When the signal was given the young men of the villages who formed the standing reserve of the peasant army dug up their buried rifles, assumed their cartridge-belts, and set off with their cloaks and provisions to the appointed rallying-place. Their first duties were simple. Everywhere they cut the telegraph lines—a measure which in itself paralysed the bureaucratic machine, and made of the Turkish officials, accustomed as they are to regard themselves as the hands and eyes of some distant superior at the end of a wire, mere agitated units. Next came the wrecking of the bridges and culverts along all the main roads—an easy task in a country where everything is in decay. At the same time the isolated inns which serve as military posts along the trunk roads were ruthlessly burned. The railway line between Monastir and Salonica was also cut, but not so completely or so often as it ought to have been. The first Turkish reinforcements, it is true, had to march over the mountains from Uskub to Monastir, but in a very few days the railway was working steadily once more. Finally, each band employed itself on the congenial task of burning the keeps and towers of the Albanian *beys*—fortresses built by forced labour, and nests of robbery and oppression—and sometimes, it must be added, in murdering their owners. Some isolated Turkish posts were also rushed and destroyed, and some convoys captured on the roads. In all these destructive activities the bands hurrying to

group themselves around the Macedonian flag were practically unmolested and unopposed.

In all, the active ranks of the insurgent army in the Monastir Province mustered as nearly as I can estimate, some five thousand men. It was no doubt a small force with which to oppose the large army of eighty thousand men which the Turks were soon able to assemble. It had no cavalry and no artillery—save two or three primitive pieces hollowed out of cherry-trees, according to the traditional plan followed in all Balkan risings. I should doubt if more than one man in four among the insurgents had ever been under fire before, or had practised marksmanship, although most of them had probably received some sort of drill. But they trusted each other and their leaders. They knew the mountain paths, and could march by night as well as day—a thing which no Turkish regiment will ever do. Their officers included not a few really capable guerilla chiefs. The headquarters were at first in the large village of Smilovo, half a day's journey from Monastir—one of those prosperous communities of migratory masons and carpenters which were the backbone of the insurrection. Here was gathered the general staff—Damian Groueff, Lozancheff, and Boris Saráffoff. Saráffoff became the De Wet of the campaign, moving lightly about, accompanied by a picked band, and rallying the local levies, now in Florina and again in Ochrida, for some exceptional effort. Lozancheff contrived by some unhappy chance to discredit himself in the eyes of his men. Groueff remained in command of the whole movement, and kept in touch with Monastir, where the consuls were regularly furnished with bulletins and reports, neatly manifolded and drafted in very tolerable French. Next in prestige was, I think, the southern detachment which worked in the Castoria-Klissoura region under the command of Tchakalároff of Smerdesh, a cruel but magnetic man, whose handsome presence and proverbial luck inspired his followers with complete confidence. The Resna contingent was commanded by a capable chief named Arsof, and the northern bands around Kruchevo were under a Vlach



TCHAKALÁROFF'S STAFF DURING THE INSURRECTION. HE IS SEATED ON THE READER'S LEFT



named Pitou Goulé, who was killed in the second week of the rising. The Ochrida, Kitchevo, and Florina contingents worked as a rule in smaller detachments and had no very conspicuous generals.<sup>1</sup> The population of the villages which gave themselves over unreservedly to the movement is about sixty thousand, but reinforcements came from some other villages as well. About one in six of the male population were under arms, which is certainly a considerable figure. The Committee could, no doubt, have put other reserves in the field if it had had a larger supply of good rifles. The favourite weapon was the Gras, a cheap, heavy, inaccurate, and altogether inferior rifle, with a single breech-loading action; but many bands wisely preferred the Martini, and some few had magazine rifles. The bands were certainly mobile when one compares them with the Turkish columns, but their action was confined to their own districts unless, indeed, they were driven from one region to another—a fate which ultimately befell both Groueff and Tchakalároff. On the whole, when one considers how small the area affected really is, this was a somewhat primitive plan. From the extreme west (Ochrida) of the rebellious region to the extreme east (Sorovitch) is not further than a good horseman, well mounted, can ride in two long summer days. From Castoria in the south to Kruchevo in the north is no further. But there were doubtless sound reasons for adopting the plan of isolated and local action. If the whole force had come together to achieve some large enterprise they would have had to abandon their villages and their families to the unchecked fury of the *bashi-bazouks*. Moreover, the country, though the distances are not great, is exceedingly mountainous, so that rapid marching was out of the question.

The first three weeks of the insurrection were a period of almost unchecked triumph. The Turks seemed incapable

<sup>1</sup> The number of the several contingents were, roughly, as follows: Smilovo and Gjavata, about 650; Kruchevo, 400; Demir-Hissar, 420; Resna, 450; Presba, 300; Florina, 450; Castoria, 700; Ochrida, 880; Kitchevo, 350; Monastir Plain, 250. In all about 4,800. But I give these figures under reserve. I have seen no official lists.



of thinking out a plan of campaign, and, save in the three towns of Monastir, Ochrida, and Castoria, the insurgents were almost everywhere supreme. They took the three country towns of Kruchevo, Klissoura, and Neveska—all of them Vlach centres perched in the most inaccessible positions upon the mountain-side. The Turkish garrisons either fled or succumbed with hardly a show of resistance. Demonstrations were also made against the towns of Resna and Kitchevo, but here the attack was never pressed home. In the three captured positions provisional governments were installed, the insurgents danced with the girls of the place in the town squares, and from the churches, bells (which the Christians rarely dare to ring) summoned the townsmen to hear glowing orations upon the duty of rebellion and the glorious prospect of freedom. These three weeks must have been the happiest interval which Macedonia has known since the coming of the Turks. The men flung away their fezes—badges of servitude—and walked erect without fear of a beating or a bastinado. It is to their credit that, instead of enjoying their brief triumph at the expense of their Greek rivals, they bore themselves tolerantly and abstained from violence—save that they levied money contributions from the captured towns. They acted indeed in the spirit of the proclamation which announced the outbreak of the insurrection—a document which shows that humane ideals do penetrate even into the Balkans, however hard the local conditions make it to observe them :—

“ We are taking up arms against tyranny and barbarism : we are acting in the name of liberty and humanity ; our work is above all prejudices of nationality or race. We ought therefore to treat as brothers all who suffer in the sombre Empire of the Sultan. To-day all the Christian populations are wretched, nor must we except even the Turkish peasants. We regard the Turkish Government as our sole enemy, and all who declare themselves against us whether as open foes or as spies, and all too who attack old men, women, and defenceless children instead of attacking us. It is against them that we direct our blows and from them we shall exact vengeance.”

A sensible attempt was sometimes made to secure the neutrality of Mohamedan villages, and occasionally with

success, as the following quaint document addressed by the notables of a Turkish village to the insurgent headquarters in Kruchevo proves:—

"We understand by the tenor of your letters that you are not evil men, that you have not left your hearths in order to attack the peaceful population (like ours), and that you are opposed only to the evildoers and to the Government which protects them. But those whom you seek are not to be found among us. They have fled to the towns. As for ourselves we promise to remain quiet. If your intention is to kill the innocent you have only to come here. May God help those whose quest is justice! We have sent on your other letters to the neighbouring villages, which are also of our way of thinking."

For a brief period everything promised concord<sup>1</sup> and success. Indeed, the insurgents had to all appearances triumphed so easily that they gave themselves over to rejoicings and neglected to push their advantage by uniting their forces against the Turkish garrisons in such centres as Resna, Ochrida, Kitchevo, Castoria, and Sorovitch. Ochrida and Castoria could have been taken only at great cost, but the other places were by no means impregnable. It would be a mistake to consider this temporary triumph as a real military success, but it was and is of enormous moral importance. It was a brief hour of happiness in the long winter of misery, and the memory of it is still a stimulus, at least to the younger men.

<sup>1</sup> It is proper in an impartial narrative to record the instances in which the insurgents were untrue to their ideal. (1) On the first day of the insurrection a detachment under Tchakalároff met a party of unarmed Moslems from the village Djerveni on the road to Castoria, and massacred twenty-four men and four boys in cold blood; four boys were spared. The village was afterwards besieged and burned. (2) Tchakalároff when driven from Klissoura made a raid with six hundred men into the Colonia district, which is purely Albanian. He burned six little hamlets—thirty houses in all. (3) Three Turkish villages were burned by way of reprisal in the Presba region. (4) The families of the Turkish officials in Kruchevo were well cared for and fed by the insurgents, while the town was in their hands, but during the attack two Turkish women were killed—possibly by accident. This was an isolated occurrence, and I believe the only occasion on which the insurgents were guilty of any wrong towards women. On the whole it is remarkable that so little barbarity was practised on the Christian side. The Committee behaved much better during the insurrection than either before or since. When it had the power to do incalculable ill it displayed self-control and moderation.

The first sign of energy which the Turks displayed was the dispatch of a force of about three thousand men under Baktiar Pasha to retake Kruchevo. They had eighteen guns with them, and outnumbered the insurgents by ten to one. There was some skirmishing, but on the 12th of August, ten days after the capture of the place, the Bulgarians made some sort of composition with the Turks, probably paying a ransom to the Pasha, in return for which the Bulgarian quarter of the town was spared. The troops and the *bashi-bazonks* compensated themselves by falling mercilessly upon the Vlach quarter, inhabited by a wealthy community with Greek sympathies. In four days 366 houses and 203 shops were burned, at least 44 men and women, all non-combatants, were murdered in the streets (of whom only three were Bulgarians); some women were violated. The pillage both of shops and houses was complete and systematic, and hundreds of the citizens were beaten and maltreated. The Bulgarians showed little bravery in this affair, and their conduct in abandoning the Vlach quarter to be pillaged was grossly unchivalrous. The Turks acted after their kind. They knew the Greeks too well to fear that even this massacre of a Phil-hellenic population would affect the pro-Turkish policy of the Greeks. Neveska and Klissoura were evacuated by the Bulgarians without a struggle—let us hope from a scruple about exposing the inhabitants to a vengeance similar to that which had overtaken Kruchevo.

About August 25th Nasir Pasha, who had now taken over the command from the feeble hands of Omar Ruchdi Pasha, began to apply a systematic plan of campaign. He is a semi-civilised person who speaks German, and has been much employed by the Sultan on special embassies of courtesy in various European capitals. He was fond of explaining that he modelled his "methods of barbarism" on those which we employed in the Transvaal. His plan was to burn all the villages of the revolted Bulgarians, and gradually to drive them into corners. He certainly had men enough to execute this scheme, and the country in which he had to operate was not really extensive, though very difficult. But there was always some gap in his cordons, some

hitch in the time-table of co-operation, or else the regiments which should have been pursuing the insurgents found it more agreeable and interesting to pillage the defenceless villages and make war on the women and children. The Turks did so far succeed in certain zones that the bands were forced to concentrate, but they always managed to break through to some less harassed region. From August the 25th onwards the insurgents were acting purely on the defensive. They maintained their ground fairly well until the middle of September, skirmishing incessantly, marching and counter-marching, usually evading the Turks with success, but occasionally brought to a general engagement. After September the fighting was very desultory, and on November the 2nd the insurrection was officially declared at an end. In all, the Committee claims that about 150 skirmishes were fought, and in these they mustered anything from 20 to 600 men. Usually the bands operated in groups of from 80 to 200 fighting-men. The total casualties of the insurgent fighting-line in killed and wounded reached 746, which amounts to about 15 per cent.—a proportion which suggests resolute but not exactly desperate fighting. In most of these encounters the insurgents must have been outnumbered by at least ten to one, and if the Turks had been even respectable marksmen they would have lost very much more severely. They rarely if ever came to close quarters or used the bayonet. The whole campaign was a game of hide-and-seek in which small forces behind rocks and trenches exchanged shots with big battalions in the open. The bands which kept the field until the end of October achieved all the success which they could reasonably have hoped for. The climate would hardly have permitted a much more extended resistance. A sort of informal armistice permitted the bands to dissolve, and not more than a third of the armed men were compelled to surrender their rifles. Only very small groups, composed of the more desperate outlaws, remained under arms during the winter, refraining from aggression, satisfied if they could escape capture and keep the framework and the spirit of the organisation alive.

To complete this brief account <sup>1</sup> of the military aspects of the insurrection, it is necessary to refer to the sympathetic revolts which occurred elsewhere. There was nothing approaching a general rising in the Uskub and Salonica Vilayets, but there was an active guerilla movement, particularly in the Struma valley, which attained its end of distracting the attention of the Turks and preventing them from throwing their entire army into the Monastir Vilayet. There were also several attempts upon the railways outside the Monastir Province, but these were hardly frequent or serious enough to be important. The chief effort outside Monastir was made in the Vilayet of Adrianople. Adrianople (Thrace) is one of the least known regions of Turkey. The great part of it is a rich plain inhabited by Bulgarians and Turks, with Greek settlements in the towns and along the coast. But of the Bulgarians of the plain a large proportion are Moslems (Pomacks). It is this greater prominence of the Mohamedan element which, in a political sense, distinguishes Thrace with its great plain, its rich rose-gardens and its tobacco-fields from Macedonia—and Thrace begins virtually at Drama. The Christian Slavs of Thrace reproduce, I imagine,<sup>2</sup> the condition of the plain dwellers of Macedonia, who are too poor and too utterly crushed beneath the dominion of their Mohamedan neighbours to be capable of the military hardihood required for an open revolt in a country where there are no mountains of refuge. There is, however, a highland region to the north-east, forming a triangular wedge between the frontiers of free Bulgaria and the Black Sea shore, and here the peasantry is by majority Christian, and has been able to preserve its manhood. In this country around the little towns of Malko-Tirnovο and Kirk-kilissé the Committee has long been a power. This region suffered as heavily as Macedonia

<sup>1</sup> The curious reader may consult the Memorandum of the Internal Organisation to which I have already referred. Even as adventure the stories which I heard from insurgent officers were seldom very interesting, turning as they did only on continual pursuits and escapes.

<sup>2</sup> I have never travelled farther east than Doiran except by railway, and can only write at second hand of the political conditions which prevail in Thrace.

during the persecution of 1903; its situation had in fact become so intolerable, mainly owing to the unchecked oppressions of the *bashi-bazouks*, that no less than 20,000 peasants—men, women and children—abandoned their homes and their crops during the months of May and June, on the eve of the harvest season, finding a refuge in free Bulgaria. In Thrace, indeed, one finds the Turkish system of government in all its native crudity. There are few consuls even in the town of Adrianople, and for some amazing reason of political selfishness Russia and Austria have always refused to permit any extension of the Macedonian reforms to this derelict and forgotten region. Among these refugees the Committee naturally found the material for bands, and two weeks after the proclamation of the revolt in Monastir the flag, with its device of "Liberty or Death," was unfurled in the Adrianople Vilayet as well (August 18th). The insurrection followed much the same course upon a smaller scale. Roads, bridges, and telegraph-lines were destroyed, isolated garrisons were overpowered, the *bashi-bazouks* driven into flight or a show of meekness, and for two or three weeks the whole of this highland region was in the hands of the insurgents. They showed little enterprise, however, and no attempt was made to capture the town of Malko-Tirnovó. The Greeks of the coast were thrown into a panic, and imagined that the Bulgarians intended to massacre them. The insurgents numbered, so far as I can ascertain, some 1,200 men, and had only 46 men killed and wounded. A relatively enormous Turkish force was ultimately drafted into the Vilayet (it is said 40,000 men), rather with the object of menacing Bulgaria than of crushing a rebellion so inconsiderable. This movement had no military interest, but for a moment there seemed a bare chance of an exciting complication. On August the 3rd the Russian Consul of Monastir, M. Rostkovsky, an enterprising but violent man, who could never remember that an Albanian Moslem has a fiercer sense of personal honour than a Russian peasant, struck a gendarme who had omitted to salute him, and was murdered on the spot. This was the second fatality within

four months among the Russian Consular Staff in Macedonia (the first affair being the assassination of M. Sterbina at Mitrovitza), and obviously it could not be passed over lightly. No one thought of demanding the punishment of the ruffians who were responsible for the massacres at Smerdesh and Monastir, but, as a Macedonian once remarked to me, "European blood is dear." Russia called for the dismissal of the *Vali*, the hanging of the murderer, and the punishment of several other scapegoats. To give more weight to her claims, the Black Sea fleet was put in motion and appeared in Iniada Bay off the Thracian coast, at the moment when the insurrection was at its height. The rebels were naïve enough to imagine that this coincidence had some bearings upon their own sufferings and their own hopes, and somehow failed to understand the sublime mental detachment of a Tsar who was capable at this supreme moment in the history of his kinsmen, the Southern Slavs, of sending his fleet to their shores with no other object than to mark his displeasure at the death of one of his consuls in a private and rather sordid brawl. But so it was.<sup>1</sup> The fleet lay at anchor, watched the flames of burning villages and beacon fires unmoved, and when a wretched gendarme had been hanged in Monastir sailed quietly home. Soon after its departure began the phase of massacre and devastation, but that development had no interest for the masters of the world's navies.

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The insurrection of 1903 was, however, very much more than an active military movement. It was also a passive demonstration in which the whole village population shared, men, women, and children. The casualties of the fighting-line were relatively small. It was the non-combatants who bore the full weight of their masters' wrath, and their miseries, losses, and privations, endured with stolid

<sup>1</sup> "The first Secretary of the Russian Embassy came this morning to inform me that the Russian fleet would proceed to Iniada, but that its entry into Turkish waters was only intended to accentuate the gravity with which his Government regard the murder of the Russian Consul, and was not otherwise connected with the situation of affairs in Macedonia" (Blue-Book, Cd. 1875, p. 273).







THE RUINS OF ZAGORITCHANI AFTER THE INSURRECTION

courage and unfaltering resolution, were a sacrifice to the ideal of liberty rarely paralleled beyond the confines of Turkey. It was not lightly risked or incurred in ignorance. A people which determines to revolt against the Turks knows very well what fate it challenges. There are memories and precedents enough to warn the peasants. The Bulgarians have not forgotten the massacre at Batak which preceded the liberation of Bulgaria. The Armenian horrors made a profound impression even in Macedonia. And lest it should have been supposed that the Turks had grown milder or more timid, there was the recent object-lesson of Smerdesh. Every village which joined the revolt did so with the knowledge that it might be burned to the ground, pillaged to the last blanket and the last chicken, and its population decimated in the process. That the Macedonians voluntarily faced these dangers is a proof of their desperation. Life had lost its value to them and peace its meaning. In many of the districts which revolted the peasants had so little doubt of what was in store for them that they abandoned their villages in a body on the first day of the insurrection. The young men joined their bands accompanied by a few women, who went to bake for them, and in some cases by the women-teachers of the town schools, who were organised as nurses for the wounded. The older men, the women, and the children sought refuge in the mountains and the woods. They took with them as much food as they could carry, drove their beasts before them, and buried their small possessions. The sick and the aged frequently remained behind, imagining that their weakness would appeal to the chivalry of the troops. As early as the second day of the rising the fate of the village of Krusje (near Resna) served as a warning against delay. It was pillaged and burned to the ground with the usual incidents of murder and violation. In most of the insurgent zones the non-combatant population came together under the direction of the Committee and formed great camps in inaccessible situations. Temporary shelters were constructed from the branches of the trees, ovens dug in the earth, and all the normal life of a Bulgarian

village reproduced as far as the circumstances would permit.

But not all the village populations fled when the insurrection broke out. There was Neocazi, a poor Bulgarian hamlet on the plain not far from Florina. From it only a few of the younger men had joined the bands. When the Turks swooped down upon it they were not content with burning it. They summoned the men together under the pretext of marching them as prisoners to Florina. On the road half-way they halted and massacred them at leisure and in cold blood, to the number of over sixty, for the crime of being the fathers of insurgent sons. It is said that some were tortured before they died, and others were made to stand in files that the soldiers might experiment with their rifles to see how many a single bullet would kill. Three days later it was the turn of Armensko, a village in the valley that leads up from Florina to the pass of Pisoderi. Its population is Slav in blood and speech, but it belongs to the Greek party and took no share in the Bulgarian movement. The troops under Haireddin Bimbashi, the butcher of Smerdesch, had been defeated by a numerous body of insurgents on the mountains above Armensko. They were retreating, angry and embittered, on Florina, and Armensko lay in their path. Its Greek priest went out to meet and welcome them and was murdered in the road, and then the horde swept down upon the unprepared and defenceless village. They pillaged and burned, and satisfied their brutal lusts undisturbed by any fear of resistance. Nearly all the wounded, many of them women and young children, who were brought in afterwards to the Greek Hospital in Monastir, were hacked and hewn with bayonets and swords. Sixty-eight of the villagers were massacred, and ten women and eight girls violated. There is European evidence for outrages that are almost unprintable—but, after all, what Europe is prepared to tolerate Europe must not be too nice to hear. Several wounded women who managed to crawl out of their burning houses were afterwards caught as they lay dying, and violated repeatedly until they expired.<sup>1</sup> I was told by a Turkish officer who

<sup>1</sup> See *Bluc-Book*, Cd. 1875, p. 319.

was engaged in these punitive operations that the troops had formal orders, which came, so they understood, direct from the Sultan himself, to burn all villages whose inhabitants had fled, but to spare the rest. The positive order they obeyed, the negative command they frequently forgot. The result was that if the inhabitants of a village awaited the troops they risked the fate of Neocazi and Armensko ; if they fled, their homes were infallibly destroyed. It was a choice between having your village burned or having it burned and being massacred as well. Most villagers preferred the lesser evil and took to the mountains, becoming thereby rebels by definition. A few object-lessons soon taught the peasants to flee betimes, and during the later phases of the insurrection the carnage in the villages was confined chiefly to the aged and the sick. The stragglers and the dilatory were often cut off before they had quitted their homes, and the bed-ridden were frequently burned alive where they lay. No village escaped entirely from this tribute, and the number of murdered non-combatants varied from threes and fours to fifties and sixties. Dymbeni and Kossenetz, for example, large villages in the Castoria district, lost, each of them, close on sixty innocent lives.

The life of the refugee population, which soon numbered close on 60,000 souls, grouped in some dozen camps among the mountains, passed through three distinct phases, so far as I can reconstruct it. During the hot weather of the first two or three weeks of August they must have lived in relative comfort and plenty, rejoicing in their brief freedom, welcoming as heroes the bands which came and went, hailing their successes, and debating every wild rumour of the aid that was to come from Europe or from Russia. Then came a second period of perhaps two weeks during which they still enjoyed relative security, had food to eat, and did not suffer grievously from cold even on the mountain-sides. But down below them their villages were burning. They heard no longer wild tales of glorious victories, but rumours of massacre and torture.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The most usual tale of horror was that on one occasion or another the Turks burned men and children alive, generally in bakers' ovens.

sound of firing haunted them, and it often happened that some young woman who had ventured back to the deserted village to see what was left of her home or to visit the hiding-place where she had concealed her gala dress, returned no more, or, it may be, crept back to die, wounded and dishonoured. Lads herding the sheep of the refugees were caught if they ventured down the valleys, and sometimes hungry children straying to the maize fields would return speechless and stricken in mind. The final stage could not be long delayed. The cordons tightened their grip around the mountains, and from their eyries the peasants would suddenly become aware of red streaks upon the green foothills, or catch on the wind the shouts of drivers urging the pack-animals which carried the mountain-guns that were to shell their place of refuge. From mid-September onwards the fugitives were hunted from forest to mountain and from peak to peak. Their only safety was to follow the now concentrated bands, and sometimes the battle raged about the lair where the women and children lay, the men fighting with all their manhood to defend some shallow trench, knowing that behind them cowered wife and child expecting massacre if their courage failed or their bullets missed the mark. Fleeing incessantly, they soon left behind them their stores of food and their herds of beasts. They were now shelterless under colder skies. There were villages which lived for days together on roots and salad grasses. The younger children died in great numbers, and men and women graduated for the epidemics which were to decimate those whom the Turks had spared. Often the big camps broke up into scattered groups of starving and terrified fugitives, who returned at last to make their submission among the ashes of their homes. It sometimes happened that these fell in with prowling soldiers or marauding *bashi-bazouks*. Fifteen villagers, for example, from Bouno (near Resna), trudging, with their priest at their head,

I could never come across an eye-witness, however, and in one instance inquiry showed that a wounded insurgent chief, whose dead body the Turks did burn, had committed suicide to avoid capture.





RUINS OF MOKRENI, AFTER THE RISING



TURKISH SOLDIERS IN A BURNED CHURCH

towards the town, were massacred without distinction of age or sex. The younger women fared the worst, for, when the troops could catch them, they were often carried off to the Turkish camps and there kept for some days until the last brute who desired them had had his will. Many were shot while they sheltered behind the insurgents during the latter skirmishes of September and October, and sometimes the same bullet wounded a mother and her baby.<sup>1</sup> It was the impossibility of feeding and protecting the refugees which compelled the leaders to proclaim the insurrection at an end with the close of October; for the weather was still relatively mild (indeed, to us who came direct from England it seemed warm), though to be sure the mountains were already snow-clad, even on their lower heights. The Turks had made war upon the women and children, and the men dared not prolong the unequal conflict with starvation. By the first week of November the population of the revolted districts had once more settled down, part of it on the sites of the ruined villages, part of it among friendly neighbours who had saved their roofs. Long before November the towns were crowded with helpless masses of starving women, who begged their bread from door to door, clamoured about the portals of the Bishops' palaces, and slept in the abandoned and ruined houses which abound in every Macedonian town.

It was at this stage that we first saw the condition of the returning villagers with our own eyes. Those who had found a roof beneath which to shelter in some friendly village were in an enviable case. They had lost everything indeed—crops, home, cattle, and household gear. They lived on the charity of neighbours, who as often as not had themselves been robbed. They owned nothing but the tattered summer garments in which they had fled three months before. They had neither blankets nor

<sup>1</sup> One case of this kind we treated in our Ochrida hospital. It is fair to cite the contrary instances. One woman who had been shot by accident in the general fusillade when the troops rushed her village was kindly treated by the Turks, who gave her bread and water. I once saw a Turkish officer (after the insurrection) give his coat and gloves to a wounded Bulgarian woman. But such chivalry was rare.



winter cloaks. At least there was still a thatch between them and the rain. But the majority were camped among their ruins, busied during the last warm days of the autumn in clearing away the rubble from some corner of their homes and erecting some sort of "lean-to" of wood and straw against a crumbling wall. Nothing but a photograph could convey an idea of the devastation. The villages were mere heaps of charred wood and blackened stone, buried beneath a red dust which the rain converted into mud. A few walls still stood upright, the only hope for the winter. Where the churches had not been burned they were riddled with bullets, blackened with bivouac fires, pillaged, dishonoured, and defiled with the ordure of a camp. The wells were sometimes buried under the *débris* of fallen houses, and in one case at least poisoned with the carcasses of beasts. The mills, like the houses, had been burned, their dams broken down, the machinery destroyed, and even their stones in some cases shattered into fragments. Of the horses and oxen which the peasants owned, even after the authorities had professed to recover the loot, not one in four remained. Of the sheep and other small beasts and the poultry I doubt if one in ten was left. Even the ploughs were burned or stolen. It was rarely, too, that a family recovered the clothing and utensils which it buried before its flight—the *bashi-bazouks* had the knack of finding spoil. Of the harvest most villages saved sufficient for four or six weeks, while a few in the upland places where the ripe crops had been left ungarnered had enough for three months at most. But more harrowing than the material ruin was the moral desolation. Women would stand on a frosty day, their breasts bare, their feet naked upon the icy ground, oblivious of cold and hunger, sobbing out some tale of how they had seen the dear head of son or husband beaten in before their eyes by soldier or *bashi-bazonk*. Not less to be pitied were the young men who had laid down their arms and returned to find neither wife nor home. I think of one whose case seemed to me a full world of commonplace miseries. He was a mason who worked in Constantinople to keep a family in a village near



TEMPORARY HUT AMONG THE RUINS, ZAGORÍCHANI



A HOME IN RUINS, DJUPÁNISHTA, 1903



Resna. He was driven out of the capital, with all his countrymen, early in the spring, and returned home with an empty money-belt. Three months of idleness followed, and, when the lot fell upon him, he went out with the village band. His wife was struck by a soldier, and died in premature child-birth. The father cared for the baby as best he could, but he could find no work, and he came to us begging that we would provide milk to save the life of the ailing child. The quick horror of painful deaths seemed less moving than this succession of everyday troubles, each due to some political catastrophe or some national hate. Nor was the misery at an end when the insurrection ceased. Hundreds of men were in gaol or in exile in some distant Armenian town, and, as the months went by, the ill-spelt missives, without date or signature, began to arrive, which told how one village leader after another had died of typhus on the way to Diarbekir. There were other troubles too, more secret and more horrible, which would come to our ears through some kindly doctor who used his skill, where the Turks would allow it, among the village folk. Two young girls, for example, in a single village, who had passed some days and nights of shame in a Turkish camp, at last gave way to madness as they realised that they must become mothers. And all the while amid the degradation and the suffering, the sickness, and the fear of famine, there weighed upon this defeated people the sense that all its sacrifice had been in vain. The Turks had triumphed; Europe was still heedless and unconcerned; Macedonia was still enslaved; and we, who were doling out our blankets and our flour among them, were only keeping them alive to endure fresh oppressions and further shame.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The statistics of the devastation can have little meaning to those who did not see it, but they deserve none the less to be cited. One hundred and nineteen villages in the Monastir Province were wholly or partially burned. Eight thousand four hundred houses were destroyed. Between fifty and sixty thousand persons were rendered homeless. The number of murdered non-combatants can hardly have been less than fifteen hundred. For these figures I can vouch. I add

The first surprise was that this population rose at all, and rose *en masse*. The second surprise, to my thinking more startling than the first, was that all the sufferings of the autumn produced no reaction whatever against the Committee or its leaders. The peasantry remained loyal to the organisation which plunged it in all this misery. Among the ashes of comfortable villages, or in the wards of the hospitals where the Relief Society had gathered the wounded women and children, there were moments when one felt tempted to curse the whole idea of insurrection, to think that no provocation could justify a population in facing such risks, to doubt whether any gain in freedom could warrant the mere physical pain involved in winning it. But these were an outsider's reflections. They seldom entered the heads of the Macedonians themselves. One heard no recriminations, no blame of the Committee, no regrets for an apparently wasted effort. In the hospital in Castoria the patients in the men's ward, recovering slowly from diseases induced by hardship and exposure, would talk almost gaily of their future plans and of the struggle they meant to renew so soon as health and spring-time should bring the opportunity. In Ochrida, where abject poverty and the tyranny of the Albanians has made the Bulgarian villagers peculiarly spiritless, ignorant, and degraded, I have known even old men declare that should the Committee give the order to march once more in the summer they would unhesitatingly obey. Nor was this attitude altogether difficult to explain. Centuries of oppression have schooled the Bulgarians to suffer. They scarcely discuss the motives of their oppressors. The idea that the Turk is naturally savage and that their own lot is to suffer is engraved on their minds. Women would

the totals for the whole of Macedonia and Adrianople, which the Bulgarians collected. I cannot verify them, but probably they are not much exaggerated—indeed, the figures for Monastir published in Sofia were sometimes less than those which I collected while making out relief lists in the villages. The total number of houses burned is given as 12,211; of homeless persons about 70,000; of refugees driven from Macedonia and Adrianople into Bulgaria, 30,000; of violations, 3,098; and of women and girls taken captive, 176; of persons imprisoned, 1,500.

speak with as much indignation about the death of their men-folk killed in battle as about any murder of non-combatants. They have given up all attempt to understand the Turks. Each fresh loss, provoked though it may have been by their own act, is simply added to their memory of age-long miseries. They have ceased to reason or reflect. They can only suffer and resent. The rift between the two races is so profound that I doubt whether even a wholehearted and intelligent attempt at conciliation on the Turkish side, were such a thing possible, could bring the smallest improvement.

The more one learned to know of the Bulgarians of Macedonia, the more one came to respect their patriotism and courage. These are no flamboyant or picturesque virtues; they have grown up in a soil of serfdom among a reserved and unimaginative race. They are consistent with compromise and with prudence. There is something almost furtive in their manifestations. And yet when the Bulgarian seems most an opportunist and a time-server, he still cherishes his faith in the future of his people, and still works for its realisation. He has no great past to boast of, no glorious present to give him courage. He does not flaunt his nationality like the Greek, or claim an imagined superiority. He will risk no needless persecution for the pure joy of calling himself by the name of his ancestors. I knew one energetic organiser of revolt who posed before the authorities as a Greek, made a pilgrimage to Athens to give colour to his professions, and returned with lithographs of the Hellenic Royal Family with which he decorated his walls. Villages will shift their allegiance from the Greek to the Bulgarian Church twice or thrice in a year—"one must watch how the wind blows," to quote their saying—but under every disguise they remain obstinately Bulgarian at heart. I have even heard a Bulgarian Bishop explaining that he had advised certain villages to transfer themselves to the Greek (Patriarchist) Church in order to distract the suspicions of the authorities.

The same strain of prudence was evident in the military

conduct of the revolt. The leaders rarely challenged a general engagement. Their early successes were all surprises in which large bands of insurgents overpowered much smaller detachments of regulars. When a battle did take place—as, for example, in the mountains of Peristeri in October—Turkish officers who were present bore witness to the splendid obstinacy of the Bulgarians. But their tactics were seldom aggressive. They never attempted to storm a bridge against cannon, as the Albanian tribesmen did in the spring of 1903 at Mitrovitza. They waged a guerilla warfare, enduring immense fatigues and great privations, content to weary and baffle the Turks in an endless pursuit. I have often asked ex-insurgents what they thought of their chiefs. The answer was always the same. They gave the palm to Tchakalároff for the significant reason that during the whole campaign he lost only ten of his men. And yet these men, when the occasion came to throw their lives away for any definite purpose, were capable of an utterly reckless heroism. The Committee never found a difficulty in obtaining volunteers for such work as mining, bridge-wrecking, or bomb-throwing, which involved almost certain death. Education among the Bulgarians, so far from weakening the primitive tribal instinct of self-sacrifice, seems only to intensify it, instead of softening it with humanitarian scruples. In estimating their courage it is not enough to measure their military achievements. The real proof of courage is that they rose at all—these peasants accustomed to cringe before the meanest Turk, schooled to endure insults and floggings without a prospect of revenge, with no tradition of revolt to inspire them, no military knowledge, no soldierly past to give them confidence. The measure of their courage is the risk they ran. There is short shrift for the wounded on a Turkish battlefield, and few exiles return from banishment.

Without this steadfast and resolute capacity for suffering, this plodding, if furtive, patriotism, this somewhat passive courage, the Bulgarians could never have made their Committee. Yet another quality was necessary—loyalty—and this, too, they possess. They have no highly developed

sense of personal honour, as the Albanians have—for that a race must have carried arms and known no master. They neither love truth for its own sake nor scorn a meanness from self-respect. But some fellow-feeling, some sense of brotherhood, keeps them true. There are few secrets in the intimate common life of the village. Every one knows who is the Committee's agent, who harbours the wandering outlaws, who has a store of dynamite or of rifles buried in his yard. Most amazing of all is the ease with which the leaders of the revolution can travel unscathed from end to end of Macedonia. The villager who has grasped Sarafoff's hand will tell afterwards of his great experience, as a Scottish clansman might have boasted that he had seen Prince Charlie. All through the winter that followed the insurrection, Damian Groueff, the President of the Supreme Macedonian Committee, the real chief of the movement, and the organiser of the campaign, hibernated in a village not many miles from Monastir. The secret must have been the common property of thousands, and not one of them seems to have thought of selling it. In the spring M. Groueff actually entered Monastir itself, lodged in a Bulgarian house, and moved freely about in streets that swarm with soldiers, police, and spies. His presence was generally known to the Bulgarians of the place; but, despite the fact that a price had been placed on his head, not a man among them was found to prefer riches to loyalty. Nor was this an isolated occurrence. The insurgent chiefs constantly venture not only into Monastir but even into Salonica, yet no single instance of treason has ever been known to occur. When one compares this uniform immunity from treason with the history of Irish conspiracies, from the days of Wolfe Tone to the Phoenix Park murders, one is forced to admit that somewhere beneath the awkward reserve of the Bulgarian character there lies a fund of loyalty and steadfast faith more reliable than any picturesque or feudal chivalry.

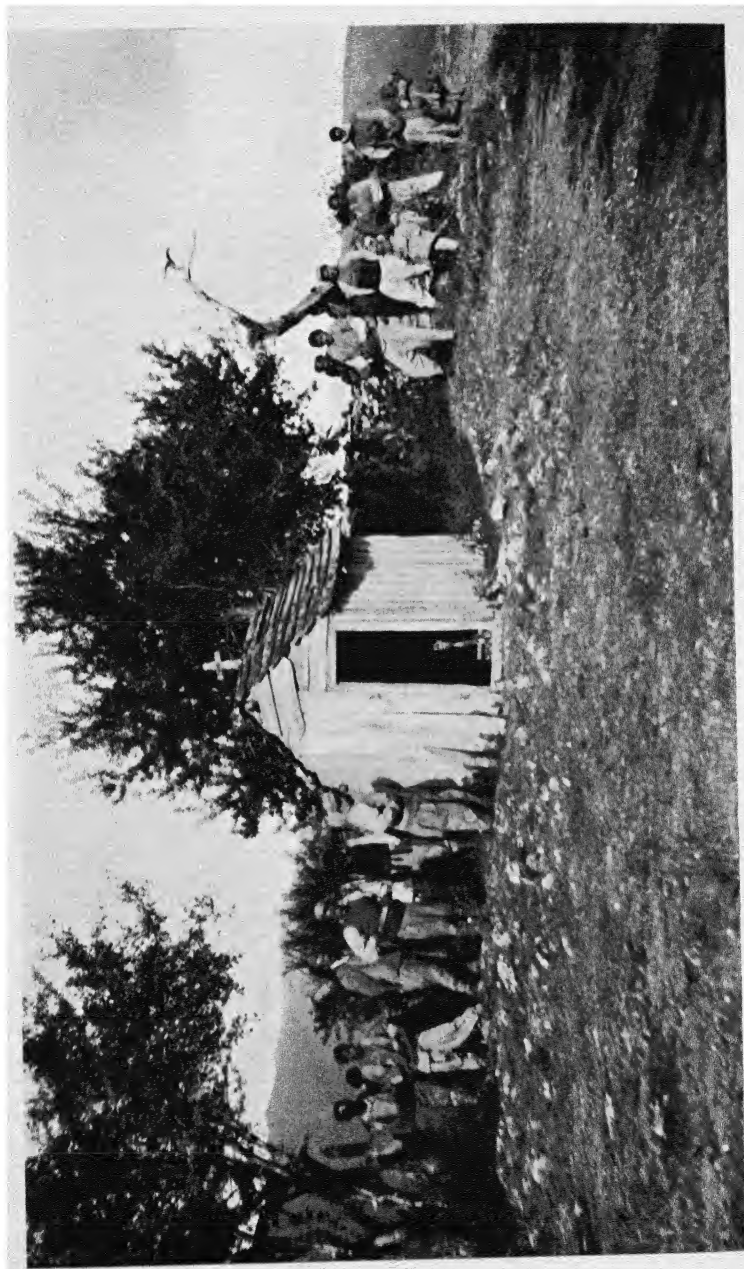
I confess that I have sometimes wavered in my judgment of the Macedonian Committee. Fresh from Europe, and plunged suddenly into a world where men fight savagely



for ideals which, to us who have achieved them, seem reverend and sacred, it is hard to believe that freedom can be won by methods which include so much of terrorism and assassination. Amid all the horrors of an insurrection that has failed, one asks whether these abstract political conceptions of self-government and nationality are worth the tears of a widow or the shame of a maid. But as the months go by one understands that these simple things of daily life, the right to plough in peace and reap in security, to marry without dishonour and rear children who need not cringe, can only be attained by a sweeping political change. Returned to Europe, it seems no less clear among the comfort and ignorance of a nation busied with the affairs of half the earth, that the wretched corner of Europe which agonises forgotten beyond the Balkans can only hope to rouse us to our duties by the violent means of open revolt, which in fact it has adopted. If one shrinks from the despotism which the Committee exerts, this also is true, that the people themselves control it, and the people themselves submit to a sacrifice which is necessary if they are to achieve their end by conspiracy and rebellion. In making a temporary sacrifice of their liberty they are giving up what they do not possess—and giving it up in the hope of winning it. Lastly, if the recklessness with which the Committee destroys life and risks it seems shocking, let us remember that life has no worth or price in Macedonia. We in Europe talk of life as though it had an absolute value. In fact its value is relative to the degree of security which a given society affords. It would be interesting to inquire what premium an English insurance company would ask upon the life of the average Macedonian villager.

The Bulgarians of Macedonia are to be judged not by the standard of morality and civilisation which in fact they have attained, but by their courage and their determination in striving for better things. The history of their ten years' struggle is their title to our sympathy. If they lack some of the dignified and gracious virtues which their Albanian neighbours possess, let us remember that the





TEMPORARY CHAPEL ERECTED AFTER THE BURNING OF THEIR VILLAGE BY THE PEASANTS OF LOKOV

honour of the Albanian stands rooted in unfaithfulness. He renounced his religion, and received as his reward the right to bear himself erect, to carry weapons and to hector it, an overman amid a race of serfs. The Bulgarian held to the faith which the centuries had bequeathed to him, bowed himself to his daily task and his habitual sufferings, learned to lie before men that he might be true to God, and acquired the vices of a slave that he might keep the virtues of a martyr.

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#### THE RIVAL COMMITTEES. (See p. 120.)

To avoid complications I have written of the Committee as though it were a single organisation. The differences among its rival sections absorb much attention in Sofia, but in Macedonia they are little felt, and they scarcely concern the outside world. The so-called "Central" Committee has virtually no footing in Macedonia, and its feuds with the main body have little effect beyond the Bulgarian frontier. This "Centralist" party is rather a Bulgarian than a Macedonian organisation. Its leader is General Tzoncheff, a retired soldier with a gallant record, whose political talents are not, I think, as conspicuous as his military qualities. He is an intimate of Prince Ferdinand, and this fact is enough to discredit him in the eyes of the Macedonians, who are convinced, I know not with what justice, that the Prince cares very much more for his dynastic interests than for the liberties of Macedonia. General Tzoncheff's lieutenant, Colonel Yankoff, is simply a brave guerilla chief. M. Michailófsky, a poet and a Professor of History, who is the nominal head of this party, is not a Macedonian, and impressed me as an eloquent dreamer.

Rather more important is the tendency directed by M. Saráffoff. He was originally a member of the Tzoncheff-Michailófsky section, but he has broken with his former allies, and now belongs to the Internal Organisation, in which he may be said to lead the left wing. His influence makes for rash decisions and violent methods. He stands, indeed, to the main body of the revolutionary party much as the less intellectual anarchists used to stand towards the orthodox Socialists in the days of the "International." When they are for regular warfare he is for dynamite. When they believe in a truce he is apt to kick over the traces. But his importance is very much exaggerated in Europe. He is certainly a picturesque personality, young, magnetic, and adventurous. A whole cyclus of legends has gathered about him. His name is a terror to the Turks, who see him in hiding behind every rock, and catch him perpetually in the weirdest disguises. He has the valuable gift of being everywhere at once. I never understood how this was managed, until I read in a London paper that he had purchased a motor-car, in which he dashes over the frontier and makes his raids into Turkey! To a man who can drive a motor-car over the Rilo mountains and along Turkish roads no miracle is impossible.

M. Saraffoff understands the uses of advertisement, and his fame is dear to the sensational journalist. But in Macedonia he is merely the rather irresponsible ally of much stronger men. The real brain of the revolt is Damian Groueff, the President of the Internal Organisation, whose name, I suppose, is quite unknown beyond the Balkans. He thinks in years, while M. Saraffoff sees no further than to-morrow's newspaper, and spends his winters among the Macedonian villages, while the heroes of the movement are posing in Paris and London. It is a pity that M. Saraffoff has captivated the journalistic imagination, for he represents everything that is bloody and unscrupulous in the war of liberation. But, indeed, the school of thought which one encounters among the conspirators who take their ease in Sofia is not representative of the real Macedonians. I once met a Balkan Tartarin, who edits a paper in Sofia—why was not Tartarin a journalist?—who assured me that the Committee was about to poison the water-supply of various European capitals with the bacillus of the plague. I ought to have laughed, but politeness restrained me, and I protested instead. Tartarin looked surprised, and then remarked, "Mais vous êtes un homme civilisé." The genuine Macedonian is too anxious to be civilised to make a speech like that, and too much in earnest to play with schemes that may amuse the secure leisure of the parasites of the movement.

Of recent developments it is difficult to write with confidence at a distance. I suspect that the tendency to internal schism among the Bulgarian organisations has become more marked than it was. My impression is that the Centralists are somewhat stronger than they were, and more bent than ever on separate action, while M. Saraffoff is less closely identified with the Interior Organisation and more nearly the chief of a distinct third party. There was some fighting in Macedonia during the summer of 1905 among the bands of these rival societies.

As these pages are passing through the press, the news arrives that the two rival committees have been reconciled, and have amalgamated under the joint leadership of M. Groueff and General Tzoncheff.





A PEASANT CART



LEGENDARY TURKISH BRIDGE

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VLACHS

THE road from Florina to Castoria sets out, like so many Turkish institutions, with excellent intentions. Once in the remote past it was evidently carefully made or at least elaborately planned. If we stumbled—on that first journey in mid-December—it was over the ribs of its foundations. If we floundered, it was among the heaps of stone flung down, in the highway, with the laudable forethought that some day they might be pressed and broken into good macadam. And if there was a difficulty in crossing the countless little torrents that traverse its course, that was chiefly because the fragments of what was once a bridge lay athwart the path and compelled us to make a circuit. (There is, indeed, a tradition still current among the valley folk of a happy time when it was possible to make the journey in a wheeled conveyance.) The road twisted and climbed—above the fields—above the woods—and into the snows. Night fell, and we stumbled on by starlight and the blue hazy gleam that came from the snow across the pass. Far down in the valley behind us glimmered the only sign of human life—a shepherd's watch-fire, while the tinkling of a sheep-bell added its music to the crisp yielding of the snows beneath our horses' hoofs. One could conceive no spot more desolate than this uninhabitable mountain, with the climate of an Alpine summit. To reach it seemed an adventure, to live upon it a daily heroism. We were wondering what precarious gain, what passion for the free life of the hills induced that herdsman to pass his life among the precipices



and the snows, when with a sudden bend and dip in the road a score of village dogs were barking round our feet. We were in the Vlach village of Pisodéri.

Stumbling up a wooden ladder which led from the reeking stable of the village *khan* (inn) to the guest-chamber above it, the kindly accents of Greek voices received us. It was a miserable little room, dirty, uncomfortable, and cramped, but the two young men who occupied it suggested, somehow, a stage of civilisation which we hardly expected to encounter in a herdsman's village on a mountain-top. One was reading a book—rarest of all sights in Macedonia—while the other was playing something European upon a genuine violin. The book turned out to be Tricoupis' "History of the Greek War of Independence," a ponderous and by no means popular work, modelled in manner and language upon Thucydides, while the two young men proved to be the schoolmasters of the village. Presently the village authorities arrived, and led us forth from our temporary refuge, and after a perilous voyage among the morasses and precipices round which the village seemed to be built we were installed in the headman's house, and there again, to eyes accustomed to the squalor and misery of Bulgarian hamlets, the surroundings breathed of distant civilisations. The floors were boarded, the walls were papered, and on them hung a map of Europe as though to remind the children who played around it that Macedonia belongs by right to the Western world of enlightenment and freedom. We dined at a table and sat on chairs—amazing innovations—and presently we were to meet the priest of the place, who actually boasted the possession of a little library. Drowsy and tired, overcome by the surprising comfort of the blazing yule-log and the well-stuffed mattresses stretched before the fire, after the long climb through the snow and the bitter air of the hills, I remember that I fell asleep, while the children spread the table and prepared the meal. Half waking, half dreaming, there rang in my ears the baffling music of some tongue as familiar as one's schoolroom. The bread which the

children put on the table was *pan*, the dog over which they stumbled was *can*. It seemed as though we had crossed centuries as well as mountains, and found a Roman camp within this fastness of the snows and mists.

The morning light only increased the puzzle. It was a little village roughly built of undressed stone, as untidy, as careless of form as any Bulgarian hamlet. It had, they told me, no more than one hundred and fifty houses, and a population of some eight hundred souls. One noticed no fields around it, and indeed it would have needed a more than Wallachian enterprise to till these mountain-tops, all crag and stone. Flocks it possessed and wood and water, but it owed nothing else to nature. One might have expected a grinding poverty, the struggle of a savage and degenerate race to wring a bare subsistence from the hillside, eked out perhaps by brigandage and plunder. But these people had, on the contrary, an air of comfort and plenty. In the midst of the straggling village a large and ambitious building was in course of erection. It is to be a secondary school, with five teachers for the boys and three for the girls. It seems a startling provision for this minute community. But these Vlach villages are but nurseries and eyries built among the rocks, where a keen-witted race is trained, which makes its career as far afield as the Greek and Roumanian languages are spoken. There is a little Pisodéri in Macedonia, where the aged repose and the children grow, but the greater Pisodéri is in Roumania and in Egypt, where fortunes are to be made in freedom. It matters little that there are no fields to till amid these barren rocks. The people of Pisodéri reap their harvests in the Delta. They were very anxious to explain to me that this school of theirs is to be a modern and commercial school. The Greeks may build their classical gymnasia where boys may learn by heart a play or two, a speech of Demosthenes and half the Odyssey. But the Vlachs are a practical people. If they too study Greek it is because there is no Eastern language so useful in the trade of the Levant.

There is no race in all the Balkans so mysterious and

so individual as the Vlachs. They shelter themselves in the Greek Church, adopt Greek culture as a disguise, and serve the Hellenic idea. It is rare to meet a man among them who does not speak Greek more or less fluently and well, but at home the national Latin idiom persists, and their callings, their habits, their ways of thinking make them a nationality apart. They are not a very numerous stock, though without their aid the Greeks would cut a poor figure among the statistics of the Macedonian races. The so-called "Greeks" of Monastir are Vlachs to a man. They form a considerable and continuous group along the Pindus range, wedged between Thessaly and Epirus. They are numerous once more between Olympus and Kara-Veria (the ancient Beroea). Elsewhere they have scattered villages, all built like Pisodéri among the rocks. Kruchevo, Neveska, and Klissoura are the most notable of these mountain-nests. They seem to be the scattered remnant of ancient Roman colonies, which took refuge on the spine of Macedonia from the tide of barbarian conquest. It was a shy and fugitive existence which they led in these retreats. Agriculture was impossible, and they gave themselves to the tending of cattle. The Vlachs of the non-mercantile villages are almost nomads—poor, wild and ignorant, with something like a gipsy reputation for dishonesty. They follow the migrations of their flocks, spending the winter, it maybe, on the plains of Thessaly—so far afield do they roam—and returning in summer to their own mountain homes. They are not all organised in villages, as are the other peoples of Macedonia. Each of the Bulgarian villages round Castoria, for example, has its four or five houses of Vlachs. They live apart, rarely intermarrying with Slavs, upheld by some tradition of an ancient superiority which teaches them to despise the newer races. If they are a timid people they are also singularly tenacious. A family may be scattered between Roumania and Thessaly, but they never cease to be Vlachs; and the women move about among their Bulgarian neighbours, never abandoning their neat costumes of navy-blue, more suggestive of Norway than of the Balkans. They

are the inn-keepers and the carriers of Macedonia. If the nomad pastoral Vlach has a bad name, the carrier (*Kiradji*) Vlach is a synonym for honesty. Their wandering habits, their international distribution, seemed to mark them out for this trade. Little by little, as they developed it, their mountain-nests, apt sites for sheep-cotes, became commercial centres, and it is no small proof of their mercantile genius that Klissoura, for example, perched on the precipitous slope of a weary mountain, its streets mere ladders cut in the rock, the roads that approach it so many toilsome spirals, should have become a place of shops and bazaars, with two market-days in the week. The railways, I fancy, have somewhat diminished the trade of the carrier Vlachs. The older men of Kruchevo and Klissoura remember the days when a caravan went twice a year, from their village to Vienna and brought back with it all that Macedonia needed from the West. But these were the days before Baron Hirsch had bribed Constantinople to allow him to build his railway. Now Klissoura has something of the air of a decayed town, which dreams amid its daily mists and infrequent suns of a glory that is departed. Half its houses are empty, and their architecture, solid, roomy, and with some incipient tendency to ornament, speaks of a greater trade than any that survives. Its comfortable shopkeepers, seated at ease on their heaps of cushions within the stout walls that defy the incessant rains of the mountain-top, will tell you that when they were boys Klissoura was the second city of Macedonia, hardly distanced by Salonica. In those great days there were even families which had pianos and German governesses! Pisodéri had a more romantic history of a great past. It is a modern village enough on its present site, for it dates only from the second decade of last century, when its ancestors, fleeing from the tyranny of Ali Pasha, found a refuge among these arid and inaccessible rocks which no cupidity would envy. Ask the average Vlach why his people have perched their homes in these undesirable sites, and he will answer, with a frankness which is eloquent of Balkan conditions, "Why, of course

from fear." "*Apo Phovon*" is the monotonous response to so many questions in Macedonia. "The coneys are a feeble folk, but they have their dwellings among the rocks." The people of Pisodéri came from Moschopolis, one of those semi-independent and relatively civilised Christian communities of Albania which preserved a Hellenic culture among the Highlands until Ali Pasha crushed them. Moschopolis was ruined, but its inhabitants escaped with their lives. Half of them settled at Pisodéri; the other half fled as far north as Prizrend, where to this day they still preserve their identity and their traditions. Moschopolis was an eager centre of that stirring of ideas which preceded the Greek insurrection. It became a nest of culture when the learned Greeks of Constantinople found a refuge in it after the capture of their city by the Turks. It had in its great days a population of sixty thousand or more. It boasted a famous school, a public library, and a printing-press; and among the treasures of the Vlach colony in Prizrend are still to be reckoned a little store of books which issued from it. I have seen, too, at Koritza, a stained-glass window, coloured with no contemptible art, which came from Moschopolis. Relics like these, seen in a background of empty houses and decaying streets, lead one to suspect that, despite railways and reforms, Macedonia has actually retrograded in civilisation during the past century. There are printing-offices in Salonica which issue semi-official newspapers in French for a Jewish public under Turkish censorship, and there is even a little hand-press in Monastir which can strike off visiting-cards in five or six languages. But in all Macedonia there is certainly at this moment no press which publishes books. To-day the Turk is stronger than he was in 1820, and the elaborate machinery of paralysis and strangulation which he calls a Government has organised itself with the aid of the telegraph into a penetrating and omnipresent system.

The origin of the Vlachs is one of those problems of Balkan ethnography which seem desperate and obscure, chiefly because the scholars who have examined them are

partisans with some nationalist thesis to uphold. No other Balkan race has quite so wide a distribution. They are Russian subjects in Bessarabia, Austro-Hungarians in Transylvania and Ruthenia. They form an independent kingdom under the national name of Roumania in the two Danubian provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia. They are a sensible fraction of the population of Servia and Bulgaria. In Macedonia they are the backbone of the Hellenic party. In Greece itself, and particularly in Thessaly, they are numerous and influential. They are to be found also in Dalmatia and Bosnia, and under the name of Morlachs (Mavro-Vlachs, *i.e.*, Nigri Latini) they served in the armies of the Venetian Republic. Their language, despite dialectical variations, due to the diversity of the alien influences to which it has been subjected, betrays a substantial identity. Their habits and customs are also similar, and even the Austrian Roumans were, like their Southern brethren, a pastoral people with the same shy preference for mountain dwellings. The Vlach language is as genuinely Latin as any of the Romance tongues of the West, and phonetically it has undergone in many ways a less drastic modification. But it is a Latin tongue cut off from Latin culture. While the other Romance languages have ceaselessly enriched themselves by a direct study of the parent tongue, the Vlachs have led their isolated life, drawing their culture from the Eastern Church and Greek literature. In the Northern speech of the Roumanian kingdom, it is said, the Latin words are outnumbered by borrowed words of Slavonic origin; but such a calculation conveys an erroneous impression, since the Latin words are those in most common use. The Vlach language as it is spoken in the Macedonian villages to-day is not much more than a *patois* for the home. Its vocabulary has lost all traces of culture. When a Vlach has occasion to use any word that involves more than the most elementary mental effort, he has recourse to Greek. If he wishes to express himself with any picturesqueness or precision he must lard his conversation with Greek adjectives. The names of modern things and of all abstractions are also

Greek, and unless he is an educated man he does not know the Latin alphabet.

The balance of evidence goes to show that before the sixth century Macedonia had largely lost its earlier veneer of Hellenism. Amid the ceaseless inroads of the barbarians such portion of the original Thracian and Macedonian population as survived must have been that which grouped itself around the Latin-speaking military stations and colonies, and while augmenting their population adopted their idiom. During the annual raids of the barbarians, this Roman element must have been uprooted and swept hither and thither by the barbarian flood. Whole colonies of provincials were dragged about in the train of these tremendous migrations. There is, for example, one authentic instance in which a Roman colony from the cities of Southern Illyria was dragged by the Avars beyond the River Save. There it remained for seventy years, but revolted and returned across the Balkans to settle in the country inland from Salonica.<sup>\*</sup> How far these Roman colonies were really Italian in blood is doubtful. We know, for example, that Trajan's colonies in the Danubian provinces, to which the Roumans of Roumania love to trace their origin, were drawn from every quarter of the Roman world save Italy. Originally they must have been largely composed of Syrians and Illyrians, but the official language was apparently familiar enough to impose itself not only on these mixed colonies of veterans but even on their wives, their slaves and the refugees who would probably join them. Their nomadic and pastoral habits were doubtless adopted more from necessity than choice. They could only maintain themselves against the Barbarians and the Slavs on their mountain-tops, and there a settled agricultural life was manifestly impossible. During their struggle for existence their Latin civilisation disappeared, while the Latin tongue persisted as the language of the home. It is easier to understand the success of the Vlachs in maintaining their identity when one remembers that for three hundred years

<sup>\*</sup> See Dr. A. J. Evans' article, "Vlachs," in the "Encyclopædia Britannica."

during the Middle Ages they maintained some political independence in Great Wallachia, which extended at one time not merely over Thessaly but also over the greater part of Southern Macedonia (see Chapter IV., p. 97 footnote). Their dealings at this period must have brought them into much more intimate association with the Slavs than with the Greeks. The Greek influence which has partially Hellenised the Vlachs of Macedonia to-day can hardly date from before the Turkish conquest. It is the work not of the Byzantine Empire but of the modern Church, and seems to have reached its height during the eighteenth century.

\* \* \* \* \*

The explanation of the failure of the Greeks to absorb the Vlachs of Macedonia, despite the influence of their Church, their commerce, and their schools, is to be sought, I suspect, in the position of the Oriental woman. She is the conservative force in the East, unchanging from generation to generation, simply because she is still almost totally uneducated. The men of a Vlach household may acquire an easy and even literary knowledge of Greek, and prefer to use it in their intercourse with one another. But it is only in the present generation that the women have begun to go to school, and Vlach persists because it is the language which they first teach to their children. There is, of course, nothing approaching the rigidity of the harem system among the Christian women of the East, but Turkish influence has had its part in delaying their emancipation. In some of the more savage towns of Northern Albania no Christian woman will venture into the streets without a veil as close and forbidding as any Moslem *Yashmak*. The Bulgarian peasant woman seems to feel herself inadequately clothed unless she has swathed her mouth and chin in the kerchief which she binds about her head. In the home her place is one of decent and timid retirement. She will not sit down at table if a stranger be present. Her place during a "call" is to hand round the jam and the *raki*, but she rarely joins in the conversation. She is in no sense the companion of her husband, she has no social place as the



hostess.<sup>1</sup> In the larger towns, where one might have expected the growth of something like a middle class with European habits and conventions, the presence of the Turkish population perpetuates the past. The streets are thought to be no place for a respectable Christian woman. There is always a bare chance of violence and something approaching a probability of insult. The native women accordingly keep indoors as much as possible, for the outer world is for their imagination a place in which Turkish soldiers lie in wait to hurl abuse at them. It is supposed that European costume, and above all European hats excite the Turk's peculiar sense of humour and even arouse his fanaticism. I have known young ladies of the present generation who keep marvellous hats and jackets, of what is supposed to be the European fashion, in locked trunks, which they exhibit on dull afternoons to callers. But outside the shuttered house and the closed courtyard they dare to wear nothing but the traditional costumes of their race. Even in Monastir, where all the townsmen wear European clothes, and every tailor calls himself a *Francoraftes*, it is surprising how few of the wealthier native women venture to wear their Salonica finery. In the bazaars and

<sup>1</sup> The position of women in the East is a subject on which one is apt to form hasty judgments. Certainly they are everywhere treated as the recognised inferiors of the men—which in nearly every respect, even in point of physical beauty, they undoubtedly are. This is more noticeable, however, in lands still under Turkish rule. During 1897, when Athens was crowded with refugees from Crete and Thessaly, who were fed at public tables, I noticed that the men and women from Thessaly sat down together, whereas the Cretan men were served first, and the women only after their lords had dined. I have often felt indignant on meeting a peasant family on its travels, the man riding, the woman afoot. But really this is due to some queer tradition of female modesty for which the men are not to blame. Two wounded girls from a village left our hospital in Ochrida, cured, but still delicate, and we provided pack-horses for them. Nothing, however, would induce them to ride, and in reply to our questions they would only say that it was "incorrect." The Bulgarian folk-songs of Macedonia prove that a delicate and quite refined sentiment may be felt by the young men during courtship. Our own peasant-ballads are not always so pretty. The Bulgarian songs also talk of the wife in a strain of familiar humour as the ruler of the house. The "subjection" of the women, which strikes a stranger most unpleasantly, is largely a matter of manners and forms.

even in the quasi-European shops of the main streets one meets few Christian women, excepting always the peasant women of the villages. Shopping is done by the men or by the servants of the family, and social intercourse hardly goes beyond the gossiping of neighbours. Even for European ladies it is thought scarcely respectable and scarcely safe to venture out of doors without the escort of an armed Albanian *cavass*—but this is no doubt due, in part, to a desire to maintain their prestige, and the men are also rarely to be seen alone. These customs and conventions, which may seem trivial enough, have in reality a profound influence on Christian society and even on Macedonian politics. Women who lead this secluded life, cut off from intercourse with any larger circle than their family and neighbours of their own sex, inevitably live in the past and conserve the past. Modern commerce, modern schools, railways, and those national movements which link the men of a Macedonian town to the free life of one or other of the emancipated states beyond the Turkish frontier, have little influence on the stagnant and secluded existence of the home. Here, for example, is one reason why, during the centuries when educated Vlachs, Albanians, and even Bulgarians imbibed Greek culture, spoke and wrote the Greek language and thought of themselves as Greeks, the women retained their own idiom and their own traditions. Had the Greeks spent the same pains on educating the women of Macedonia that they took to Hellenise the men, the whole Balkan Peninsula might have been Greek to-day. Generation by generation the children of these artificial Greeks learned at their mother's knee a native and non-Hellenic tongue. They might despise it as a *patois*, they might be ignorant of the very alphabet in which it should be written. But despite themselves it was in this *patois* that they were forced to express their most intimate thoughts, their most human emotions. It only needed an impulse from without, and the revolt of nationalism which the women had unconsciously prepared found an echo in the very fibre of their minds. Tardily the Greeks are realising their mistake. There are now secondary schools

for girls which are doing their best to Hellenise the Vlachs of Monastir and the Albanians of Koritza. But the social conditions of this Turk-haunted land are against the enterprise. The girls marry early and leave school early. They cannot abandon the *patois* of their mothers. Greek is for them the language of a distant and masculine outer world beyond the closely guarded home, and while that world is closed to them its language is a superfluity, a mere elegant accomplishment. I have seen the excellent Greek school for girls at Monastir where Vlach maidens are painfully taught to construe their Xenophon. The ludicrous mistakes of grammar which one heard in the lower forms were enough to show that the teachers were drilling these children in a foreign tongue. It is easy to taboo every word of Vlach within the schoolroom walls. But outside on the steps when Urania quarrels with Aspasia over her broken doll, she expresses her feelings in fluent and natural Vlach. And what is true of the Vlachs is equally true of the Albanians. I knew a wealthy commercial family in Koritza which showed the several strata of Hellenisation very clearly. The mother was a dignified old lady who dressed in native costume and knew no word of any language but Albanian. The sons, merchants and bankers, spoke excellent Greek, which had, however, a stilted and classical tinge that they would never have acquired in the nursery. The daughters of the house wore "skirts and blouses." They had passed through the Greek High School; but that was some years ago. To-day they know about as much of Greek as the average middle-class girl at home knows of French, and are quite as shy of venturing to express themselves in it.

Twenty years ago there was nothing in Balkan politics so inevitable, so nearly axiomatic, as the connection of the Vlachs with the Greek cause. They had no national consciousness and no national ambitions. Scattered as they are, it was obviously impossible for them to dream of a Vlach nation. They were unmoved by the secession of the Bulgars—indeed, it only confirmed them in their rooted belief that the Bulgars belong to an inferior order

of creation. With some of them Hellenism was a passion and an enthusiasm. They believed themselves to be Greek. They baptized their children "Themistocles" and "Penelope." They studied in Athens, and they left their fortunes to found Greek schools and Greek hospitals. With the mass of the Vlachs, however, this loyalty to Greece was a more calculating and interested attachment. This sparse and furtive race is of necessity opportunist. It seeks to merge and conceal itself in some larger organisation from the same timid and unobtrusive instinct which causes it to build its villages on the mountains. So long as Greece held an undisputed primacy among the Christian peoples of the Balkan Peninsula it was obviously the interest of the Vlachs to shelter under the Greek name. She was the eldest of the independent states, she claimed the reversion of Constantinople itself, and, what is perhaps more important, she controlled the Church. And so the Vlachs attached themselves to the Greeks as the Jews attach themselves to the Turks. But the recent misfortunes of Greece have thrown some doubt on the wisdom of this connection. The war of 1897 not only exposed the Greeks of Turkey to the hostility of the Government, but it demonstrated the hopeless weakness of the Greek army. The Bulgarian Committee, on the other hand, is a real and very present force, which no prudent race of timid principles can affect to despise. Moreover, behind the Committee the Vlachs can discern the efficient Bulgarian army and the overwhelming power of Russia. They feel that the Greek idea of a revival of the Eastern Empire on a Hellenic basis is a very remote chimera indeed, and being practical politicians they are beginning to reconsider their place in the new scheme of things. The stronger force has an attraction for the Vlach mind, which sometimes finds a naïve and frank expression. "Greece has no army," as a Vlach storekeeper in Klissoura said to me, "and Roumania is very far away. Bulgaria is both near and powerful." Unwilling, on these sound if somewhat unromantic grounds, to excite the animosity of the Bulgarians, who are after all their best customers as well

as the masters of a dangerous secret organisation which shows little mercy to its enemies, the Vlachs have found the present Hellenic policy a very sore strain on their loyalty. It is very well for the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople and Greek Ministers in Athens to conclude an alliance with the Turks against the Bulgarian "wolves," and to exhort all the faithful to denounce and betray their Bulgarian neighbours to the Turkish authorities. But isolated Vlach villages like Pisodéri and Klissoura have after all to live among these "wolves," and they find their friendship more profitable than their vengeance. And without attributing to the Vlachs any high or chivalrous motives, which scarcely form a part of their character, they are certainly "good neighbours," whose native kindness has not been undermined by a "cultured" devotion to political abstractions. When the Bulgarian villages round Klissoura had been burned by the Turks with the blessing of the Greek Archbishop of Castoria, and the assistance of a Greek band, the Vlachs gave the homeless refugees a welcome and a shelter, and housed nearly two thousand of them for the winter. In significant contrast was the attitude of the genuine Greek town of Castoria, which received barely a score of Bulgarian fugitives. Another Vlach village, which I will call X, was on even more intimate terms with the rebels. It had no scruple about supplying Tchakalároff's band with provisions. It had quietly armed itself, moreover, for all eventualities, and assured me that it had its five hundred rifles in a safe but convenient place. At the outset of the insurrection it even had some thoughts of joining the Bulgarians. But with true Vlach caution it waited to see how matters would go. If the rising had promised success, then, for all its Greek school, its Greek priests and its Phil-hellenic traditions, it would have joined the stronger side. But not all the Vlachs temporised. Sixty young men from a group of Vlach villages near Monastir actually joined the bands. Others from Florina and Monastir swelled their ranks, and while the Greek officers in Athens were offering their swords to the Sultan, these lads were marching against

the Turks to the rhythm of a Greek war-song. But despite this Vlach legion, and the fact that the Vlach, Pitou Goulé, who led the Kruchevo bands, and one of Tchakarálloff's most trusted lieutenants, Mitri Vlacho, did their best to rouse their kinsmen, it would be a mistake to suppose that any great number of them joined the Bulgarians openly. That will happen only when the Bulgarians are on the eve of victory.

From another quarter the Greek connection is seriously threatened. Thirty years ago a clever Hellenised Vlach of Monastir, Apostolo Margariti, once a teacher in a Greek school, invented the Roumanian propaganda in Macedonia. Servia and Bulgaria and Greece each had their foothold in Macedonia. By standing aloof Roumania virtually renounced her position as a Balkan State. Doubtless the Vlachs are nowhere in a majority, and Roumania can never hope for the reversion of any portion of Macedonian territory. But in these poor relations, a kindred people speaking the same tongue, she obviously has the means of making her influence felt. Could she but detach the Vlachs from their allegiance to Greece, she would have at once her pieces in the game. Should she wish to acquire the friendship of Bulgaria, she could throw the Vlachs into the balance on the Bulgarian side, and demand her price for the favour in any re-arrangement of territory—the Bulgarian district of Silistria, for example. Should she be on bad terms with her Bulgarian neighbour, she can coquet with Greece, talk of the common interest of the Greek and "Latin" races of the Balkans in opposing the common barbarian enemy, and forthwith direct the Vlachs to assist their old allies once more. Indeed, the situation seemed to lend itself to endless combinations, any one of them fruitful of advantage.<sup>1</sup> The Vlachs are, in a sense, the pivot of the Macedonian question. They are not numerous in comparison with the Bulgarians, or even with the Albanians. But without them the Greeks would cut a sorry figure. North of Castoria there is not so much as a single Greek village.

<sup>1</sup> A Vlach-Albanian alliance is also a much-discussed possibility (see Chapter VIII., pp. 286-87, note).

It is only the Vlachs who give Hellenism a foothold. Withdraw them from their Greek alliance, and Greece must disappear from Macedonia. Group them with the Bulgarians, and the Slav supremacy will be unquestioned and unchallenged. This reasoning appealed to Roumania, and Margariti obtained the funds he demanded. Roumanian schools were opened in all the more important Vlach centres. Villages were bribed to declare themselves Roumanian, and priests here and there began to say Mass in Roumanian. The Turks were delighted. It meant one rift the more among the Christians. The Greeks naturally fought the new movement with their familiar weapons. No calumny was too gross for poor Margariti himself, and probably he was no better than the average Levantine adventurer. The Patriarch showed himself, as usual, more Greek than Christian. The idea of nominating a Vlach Bishop was scouted, and the few priests who dared to say Mass in Roumanian were promptly excommunicated. For a generation the movement made little progress. The schools had more teachers than pupils, and every pupil had to be paid to learn. None of the larger and wealthier Vlach villages abandoned Hellenism, and for a time it seemed that the Greeks could afford to laugh.

But within the past two or three years a change has become apparent. The strain of the Greek connection will bear no more, for Greece is too clearly a weak protector. Roumania has redoubled her efforts. She now votes 600,000 francs annually for the propaganda—a sum which will buy many adherents. She has opened a Consulate as far south as Jannina. The consul at Monastir has won the ear of Hilmi Pasha, who sees the policy of weakening the Greeks. Through the consul's influence any Vlach of moderate parts can be sure of obtaining a Government appointment, and there could be no more powerful bribe than that. Village after village has accepted a Roumanian school, and only the wealthier centres hold out.

In May, 1905, the Vlach question came to a crisis. The Vali of Jannina, who was under Greek influence, did violence to the sanctity of the Roumanian Consulate and

to the persons of some Roumanian school inspectors. A violent diplomatic conflict followed, which ended in a complete victory for Roumania. But indeed it suited Turkish policy to yield. The Vlachs are now formally organised as a separate nationality (*Millet*), with the right to possess officially recognised schools and churches of its own. From the Turkish standpoint this can only tend to weaken the Christians. The Greek Patriarchate protested, as it always has done wherever a Balkan race has won the right to worship in its own tongue. The only result was to drive the Vlachs towards the Exarchist fold. They know that the Bulgarians will respect their language and their racial identity—the Bulgarians are not Imperialists. The murderous violence of the Greek bands has done the rest, and the Vlachs, too weak to stand alone, are now the allies of the Bulgarians.

For some years to come, Greece and Roumania are likely to continue their battle for the possession of the Vlach villages.<sup>1</sup> The conflict rages mainly around the Church—like all conflicts in the Balkans—and both sides show a ghoulish tendency to make the graveyard their chosen battle-ground. No Vlach can die in Monastir without a free fight between pro-Greeks and pro-Roumanians as to which language shall be used to dedicate his soul to God. Greeks and Catholics never fought with more ardour for the keys of the Holy Sepulchre than do Greeks and Roumanians for the corpse of a dead Vlach. An extract from an official Greek publication<sup>2</sup> gives a lively idea of one of these encounters :—

“A Vlach belonging to the Greek-Orthodox Church having died at Monastir, his brother, who had been won over to the Roumanian propaganda by methods familiar to us all, actually dared to form the project of having him buried by a Roumanian priest not recognised by the Patriarch, and to refuse the (Greek) Bishop of Pelagonia entry into the mortuary.

“These proceedings aroused the liveliest irritation among the Greek-Orthodox population of Monastir and among the friends of the dead man. There was clearly an intention to create a prece-

<sup>1</sup> For the later developments of this feud, see Chapter. VII., p. 218, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin d'Orient*, Athens, July 1, 1904.



dent which would soon permit the Roumanian propaganda to have its own priests, and to build a church at Monastir, in defiance of the canons of the Orthodox Church and of the clearly expressed will of the Vlach population. Moreover, the suspicions of the public were confirmed by the fact that the said propaganda is building a house which has a strange resemblance to a chapel.

"The Greek Bishop having fulfilled his duty, which was to forbid the celebration of the funeral rites by an unrecognised priest, the Turkish authorities had the body embalmed, and announced that the burial must be postponed until the arrival of instructions from Constantinople.

"But in spite of this declaration they decided shortly afterwards to have the dead man buried by the Roumanian priest. At this news the exasperated populace went to the mortuary, unharnessed the hearse, assaulted Pinetta, the notorious son-in-law of Apostolo Margariti, with several other prominent pro-Roumanians, and refused to obey the armed force which summoned it to disperse. The whole town was in disturbance, and the market was closed for three hours.

"The *Vali*, greatly impressed by the decided attitude of the Greeks, whom two charges of cavalry had failed to disperse (?), telegraphed directly to the Sultan to lay before him the gravity of the situation, and to ask for instructions. In reply he received the order to surrender the corpse neither to the Greeks nor the pro-Roumanians, and to entrust the local authorities with the burial."

This glorious victory for Greece is a significant commentary both on the habits of the Greek mind and the methods of the Turkish Government. These Thermopylaes of the mortuary are the triumphs to which modern Hellenism aspires. Every detail is a satire in itself—the inability of the local authorities to bury a corpse without consulting Constantinople; that delicious touch of the embalming of the poor body while Constantinople tardily replies; the final appeal to the Sultan himself, and the rough justice of the decision that since the Christians were quarrelling, the body must have a secular burial. Nothing could be more Turkish, and nothing could be more Greek.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GREEKS

**T**HERE is an obscure little place in Macedonia which deserves the title of "the home of lost causes." Castoria is a town cloistered among the hills and mirrored in a lake of calm. It stands amidst the waters on its narrow neck of land, and the ruined gateways that block the road to the mainland and the modern world serve only as an exit for the restless and the young. To the west a discreet curtain of low hills rises abruptly from the further shore, veiling the plain where the Albanian is master. To the north and the east there are mountains on whose slopes hang the white villages of Slav peasants, but at a distance one may confound them with the snows.

Castoria itself is Greek, an islet fixed amid the unquiet waves of Albanian raid and Bulgarian rebellion. It is disdainfully, completely Greek, and it treats as vain travellers' tales the rumours that tell of other races and barbarian peoples. The Bulgarians of the next hamlet are remote as anthropophagi; the Albanians just beyond the hill are the unknown tribes of the Cimmerian darkness. On this rock the Byzantine Empire has never ended. It was a place of exile under the Eastern Cæsars, and the modern people of Castoria are the lineal descendants of patriots who contended against the Filioque clause. To this day it boasts its hundred and fifty churches—votive chapels for the most part, erected by banished noblemen in the hope that Providence might think better of it and restore them to favour at court. There are, to be sure,

some Turks in Castoria, but they are nomads and aliens who came but yesterday and may go to-morrow.

There is a Turkish *Kaimakam* in Castoria, and a big konak, which serves as prefecture. But the Governor is a harmless little man, some clerk from Constantinople, a foreigner who speaks no language of the country. The prefecture is a crumbling shell with walls of lath and plaster and a great gaping hole over the principal doorway. The real Governor is the Greek Archbishop. You may see him any day towards noon—a handsome figure with black robe, black beard, flowing locks, and chiselled features, prancing up the main street on his white horse from the prefecture to his own palace on the hill. He has been dictating policy to the Turkish *Kaimakam*. A week before our first meeting a Bulgarian Bishop had ventured to slink into the town. Within an hour of his arrival the church bells were ringing; the Greek Archbishop on his white charger, was massing the faithful for the act of protest, and soon a surging crowd was shouting death to the invader, under the house where he had sheltered. A few hours later a Turkish escort conducted the rash intruder out beyond the gates of the sacred city, and abandoned him in the wilderness, inhabited, so rumour has it, by the wolves and the bears and the Bulgarians.

There are many ways of dealing with Turks. There is the old-fashioned English method of bullying. There is the brutal, inartistic, Bulgarian way, much practised by the Committee—plain, downright blackmail. The Greek method is subtler. A Greek, when he corrupts you, does it with grace. He makes you feel that you are doing him a favour when you accept his very inadequate gift. He flatters your magnanimity. He tickles the dull Turkish wit with tales and anecdotes and a flow of easy talk. The first qualification of a Greek Bishop is to talk Turkish with elegance, and the second is to use the Church funds with discretion. It is often said that the Turk has corrupted the East. But then it was the Greeks who corrupted the Turk.

The Archbishop's was a character that repelled, yet





THE GREEK ARCHBISHOP OF CASTORIA GRACING A TURKISH REVIEW. NEXT HIM STANDS THE TURKISH  
CAIMAKAM, AND FURTHER TO THE RIGHT, THE MILITARY COMMANDANT

fascinated. One was never at an end of the surprises which it offered. I remember well our first meeting. We began our conversation in Greek, but in a few minutes we had discovered that we had been at a German university together, and the man I had taken for a Byzantine assumed the guise of a Berliner. Education is rare among the Greek Bishops, and I had never yet met a man among them who spoke a Western tongue. His Beatitude seemed a modern of the moderns. Could this be the fanatic who persecuted Bulgarian peasants to force them into his Church? Could this be the raging partisan who massed his people to drive the schismatic Bulgarian Bishop from the town? In five minutes he had professed himself a philosopher. In ten minutes he had avowed himself a freethinker. And he had views on psychology. He had read his Lotze, and soon we were criticising the ethics of Wundt. But there, above my head, on the wall, in a conspicuous place, hung the photograph of a ghastly head, severed at the neck, with a bullet through the jaw, dripping blood. And then I remembered the tale. That head had belonged to a Bulgarian chief. A band of bravoës in the Archbishop's pay had murdered him as he lay wounded in hiding. And the tale went on to tell how the murderers carried the bleeding trophy to the Palace, and how the Archbishop had had it photographed and paid its price in fifty pieces of gold. And there, over my head, hung the photograph. Somehow we stopped talking moral philosophy.

We met once again, this time in the konak of the Turkish *Kaimakam*, and once more a photograph caught my eye. It showed the Turkish authorities standing in full-dress round a Turkish cannon, and in their midst, handsome, conspicuous, with an air of mastery and command, was the Archbishop himself. And then I remembered another tale, which told how his Grace had sent his bravoës to guide the Turkish troops in their work of massacre, and blessed the cannon that were to batter the Bulgarian villages to dust. And then, under the very ears of the *Kaimakam* and the local commandant, his Beatitude began to talk treason—in

German. He assured me that his alliance with the Turks was only temporary. A great day was coming, when Hellenism would claim her own. It was only necessary to crush the Bulgarians first. A smile played over the handsome face as he assured me that he had brought up Cretans, trained mountaineers, redoubtable fighters, to spy out the land and study the passes, against the day when he would unfurl the flag of revolt. Nor had he forgotten to collect his store of rifles.

Happily for the Greeks their Church reckons only one Borgia among its Bishops. The man has a quick wit, a restless will, a nervous, well-knit body which have all gone to the making of an exceptional temperament. But about his attitude there was nothing at all unusual. The Greeks of Macedonia are before all else legitimists. The Bulgarian will assert that in point of fact the Macedonians are Slavs. The Greek takes higher ground. His mind moves among abstractions. He talks not of Greeks, but of Hellenism, not of fact, but of right. That Hellenism has a right to Macedonia is his thesis, and he is never at a loss for an argument. He begins of course with Alexander. It does not trouble him that in classical times the Greeks possessed only a few isolated colonies on the Macedonian coast. He waves aside the objection that for the ancients, Alexander and his Macedonians were no better than barbarians. Aristotle won the country for Hellenism when he gave lessons to Philip's son, and all Macedonia is in consequence a sort of legacy bequeathed by the Stoa to King George. Object that even the Macedonians vanished, and the Greek changes his ground. Hellenism, which had meant Athenian culture, now stands for the Byzantine Empire. But in the interval between Aristotle and Constantine Macedonia was more or less Romanised. In the dark ages it was ruled by Servian kralcs, by Bulgarian tsars, and even by Frankish kings, but still its legitimate overlord was Byzantium, and Byzantium had become Greek. One may answer that the Byzantine Empire has after all gone under, and that it had lost Macedonia to the Slavs long before it was driven from Constantinople. But once

again the old elastic abstraction re-appears. "Hellenism" claims these peoples because they were civilised by the "Greek Orthodox" Church. That is a conception which the Western mind grasps with difficulty. It is much as though the "Roman" Catholic Church should claim the greater part of Europe as the inheritance of Italy. To make the parallel complete we should have to imagine not only an Italian Pope and a College of Cardinals in which Italians predominate, but a completely Italian hierarchy. If every Bishop in France and Germany were an Italian, if the official language of the Church were not Latin but Italian, and if every priest were a political agent working for the annexation of France and Germany to Italy, we should have some analogy to the state of things which actually exists in Turkey. So it has been ever since the Turks took Constantinople, and so it is still. While the first Sultans destroyed the Byzantine Empire they gladly tolerated the Orthodox Church. The Patriarchate was sold at frequent intervals and at a steadily rising price to any Greek adventurer who could buy his nomination. He recouped himself by selling the consecration of Bishops, and they in turn, regarding this outlay as a legitimate investment of capital, proceeded to farm their dioceses. Out of this system there grew up a new Greek aristocracy in Constantinople, grouped round the Phanar—as the Patriarch's seat was called. The lay members enjoyed the confidence of the Porte, and bought offices of much profit and power. Phanariots were always chosen to govern Moldavia and Wallachia, and they usually filled the positions of Dragoman of the Porte and Dragoman of the Fleet. The clerical members exploited the Church, and between them they set themselves to crush the Slavs and the Roumanians with the authority of the Turks behind them. They extinguished the Servian Patriarchate of Ipek, and the Bulgarian Patriarchate of Ochrida. The hierarchy by the middle of the seventeenth century was a close preserve for Greeks, and their power was unchecked until in the early decades of the nineteenth century the Greek Wars of Independence caused the Turks to suspect the loyalty of their Phanariot



civil service. The Slavonic Churches had disappeared from Macedonia, and everywhere the Greek Bishops, as intolerant as they were corrupt—"Blind mouths that scarce themselves knew how to hold A sheephook"—crushed out the national consciousness, the language, and the intellectual life of their Slav flocks. It is as a result of this process that the Eastern Church is a Greek Church. The sanctions of "Hellenism," so far as they rest on the Church, are the wealth of the Phanariots and the venality of the Turks. But it is after all a barren title. The Greeks had their chance. For three centuries they monopolised the culture of the Near East. The very names of Slav and Bulgarian persisted only as terms of abuse. Slav letters were forgotten, and even the Slav libraries in the old monasteries were burned by the Greek Bishops. But while they alone had learning, riches, or influence, they never rose to the height of their position. Had they played their part as elder brothers in civilisation towards their Slav parishioners, under the common oppression, the Balkans would have been Greek to-day. Their thoughts were all of the rights they had bought, and the profits they might make. They acknowledged no duties, and Macedonia in consequence was never Hellenised. But to-day, when the Bulgarian revolt is an accomplished fact, and even Vlachs and Albanians are growing restless under the old intolerant dominion, the Greeks can see in the situation only a rebellion against their own immemorial privileges; the sense that their own profits, their own prerogatives are at stake, blinds them to the most obvious facts, and hardens the racial conflict into something worse than a national feud. It is the revolt of a peasantry against a privileged aristocracy, as well as the clash of two competing races. To the Greek Bishops all Macedonians are Greeks because they are by right the tributaries of the Patriarch. True, they are at present in schism, but a schism is an offence against the rational order of the Universe. A Greek can never bring himself to regard the Bulgarians as a race with the same right and title as his own. They are simply excommunicated schismatics whose contumacy must be reduced by any

means available. The patent fact that they are not Greeks and do not even know the Greek language in no way disturbs him. The Bishop of Florina, when he wishes to address a sermon or exhortation to his flock in the Cathedral, is obliged to preach in Turkish. They are all Bulgarians : few of them know Greek, but most have been compelled to pick up a certain knowledge of Turkish. And yet Florina figures in the Greek imagination and in Greek statistics as a Greek town. It belong to "Hellenism"—a Hellenism that expresses itself in the dialect of an Asiatic tyranny.

There is yet another development of the Greek theory which deserves a rather more respectful handling. It is politically sound, but the range of its application is not large. I have never heard it in the East : it is due rather to a few cultured Greeks domiciled in Paris, who have come under the influence of Radical Philhellenes of the type of M. Clémenceau. It is an adaptation of Mazzini's idealistic nationalism. Race on this view is a mere invention of pseudo-science, and language is an accident. A man may talk what dialect he pleases and still possess "a Greek heart." The anthropologists may invent what classification they choose for his skull ; if "Hellenism" is the vital force of his life, of what importance is his facial angle ? The folk of Alsace may be Germans by race and talk a German *patois* in their homes, but on any Liberal view of nationality they are French. Nationality, in short, is a spiritual and not an ethnological fact ; it rests on common ideals, a common history, common strivings in the past and common ambitions for the future ; its test is neither race nor language, but consent. For my part I agree warmly, but I fail to see the application. In the first place I have my doubts whether the "Hellenism" of a Macedonian Slav peasant who cannot speak a word of Greek has any meaning at all. What is its ideal content, where are the common traditions and aspirations which Mazzini's theory requires ? With the educated Vlachs of Monastir the case is different ; intellectually they are Greeks, whatever language they may talk at home ; but unfortunately their numbers are relatively

inconsiderable. One might admit perhaps that a Vlach, and even a Slav village, however slight its culture and however scanty its knowledge of Greek, is for political purposes to be reckoned as Greek, provided that its adhesion to the Greek national propaganda (which means in practice the Patriarchist Church) is permanent and voluntary. But of how many villages north of Castoria and Vodená could this be asserted? The Vlach villages are passing through a transition stage, and if they were freed from the spiritual terrorism of the Greek Church, which holds them by a threat of excommunication, and the physical terrorism of the Greek bands which assassinate their notables and teachers, it is possible, though by no means certain, that the majority of them would declare themselves Roumanians. Over most of the Slav villages which are still Patriarchist I imagine that the hold of the Greek propaganda is even more slender. They shift their allegiance year by year according as they think they have more to fear from the hostility of the Greek Bishops or the Bulgarian Committee. So far as there is a real Greek party among them it consists mainly of the wealthier peasants—priests, moneylenders, storekeepers, and innkeepers—and even these men are “Greek” largely because the existing *entente* between Turks and Greeks procures them the favour of the authorities. With a Greek band and an energetic Bishop to back them, they may succeed at present in retaining the mass of the peasants in certain villages within the Greek fold. But my impression is that the more democratic Bulgarian movement really has the sympathy of large numbers of these peasants who are “Greek” from fear or from calculation. Under an impartial European control which reformed the Turkish administration and suppressed the bands, I fancy that a *plébiscite* would show that even in the districts of Vodená, Morichovo, and Serres, where Greek influence is still strong among the Slavs, the vast majority of the peasants would prefer to enrol themselves as Bulgarians rather than as Greeks. The Liberal Mazzinist theory of nationality can be applied to the Balkans only after liberal conditions have been created.

The ecclesiastical pretensions of the Greeks are ludicrous enough, but they are not to be dismissed with a laugh. They have introduced a savagery into the relations of official "Hellenism" and the Bulgarian peasantry, which makes for something more than comedy. Early in the winter which followed the Macedonian rising it became obvious that epidemics might prove more fatal to the houseless villagers than either hunger or the Turks, and there were, moreover, wounded women and children to be cared for. It seemed desirable to provide some sort of hospital for their use at Monastir. There are, it is true, two Turkish hospitals, one civil and one military, but the average peasant would rather die than trust himself within them. There is also a Greek hospital which is spacious and well-managed. Hearing that its two upper storeys were vacant, it occurred to me that if the British Relief Fund paid the expenses, the Greeks might consent to set apart these unoccupied rooms for the benefit of the Bulgarians. I went accordingly to the Bishop of Kruchevo, who was then acting for the Metropolitan of Monastir, to propound this scheme. A priest was standing in the doorway, and in my innocence I asked him in Greek if the Bishop was within. He looked blankly at me, and then answered in Bulgarian, "Nesnam Girkski" ("I don't know Greek"). I suppose he would be officially known in the language of controversy as a "Bulgarophone Greek." Upstairs the Bishop was seated on a species of throne, surrounded by laymen, in what was evidently a kind of council-room. He was an elderly man, ample and stately, with a solid, comfortable, unintelligent dignity, which suggested a rather holy seal. I made my proposition, which seemed to take the poor man's breath away, and then followed this dialogue :—

*The Bishop.* The thing is utterly impossible. Our hospital is only for Greeks.

*Myself.* That surprises me, your holiness. I am told that the English Consul's *cavass* is at present a patient. Now he is an Albanian Moslem.

*The Bishop.* Perhaps. Perhaps. I don't know. We might accept Europeans or Catholics or even Turks as paying

patients, but never a Bulgarian—certainly never a Bulgarian.

*Myself.* May I ask why?

*The Bishop.* They are our enemies.

The answer was so frank, so primitive, that I found myself asking him whether his hospital was a Christian or a pagan institution, when a gentleman who was sitting in the circle turned the uncomfortable subject by enunciating the startling proposition that there are no Bulgarians. There are only "Bulgarophone Greeks." I inquired how it happened that they came to speak Bulgarian. And then, more or less in chorus, the Bishop and the laymen proceeded to develop a theory which is to be found even in the works of some Greek apologists, who profess to write as scholars and historians. Originally, so runs this theory, the population of Macedonia was Hellenic, but it won so many victories over the Slavs, and took so many prisoners of war, that linguistic difficulties arose. The Slavs being then, as now, notoriously stupid, would not learn Greek, so the Greeks were forced to learn Slav in order to have a means of giving orders to their servants. Little by little they forgot their own language, and the "Bulgarophone Greek" of modern Macedonia is the result.<sup>1</sup> "Well," said I, "if these people

<sup>1</sup> This theory, even if it had a basis in fact, manifestly defeats itself. For if the Greek landed gentry learned Slav to oblige their serfs and labourers, the inference surely is that these latter were in the majority. But there is no basis of fact. The modern Greek finds it no trouble to speak three or four languages at once. He would not have forgotten his own tongue, even if he had been obliged to acquire Slav. Moreover, at the time of the Turkish conquest, Western Macedonia was in the hands of the Serbs, and the landed nobility were Slavs. Then, as now, the Greeks were probably confined to a few fortified centres like Melnik (Melenikon). Melnik, though it is completely surrounded by an aggressively Bulgarian rural population, is one of the most unmistakably Hellenic centres in all the East. Hidden in a cleft on a mountain side it has defied time, the Bulgarians, and the Turks with equal success. It is still a Byzantine town. Its people up till a very few years ago were rigidly divided into plebs and patricians who did not intermarry and had little social intercourse. Among the patricians such names as Lascaris, Comnenos, and Palaeologos are still to be found. If there had ever been a Greek population in inland Mace-

are really your brethren, why should you hesitate to receive them in your hospital ? ”

*The Bishop.* They are all criminals.

*Myself.* In what way, your holiness ?

*The Bishop.* They have seized our churches, driven out our priests, and even erased the Greek inscriptions on the walls.

*Myself.* But, after all, I suppose these churches were built by the money and labour of these same peasants ?

*The Bishop.* They belonged to the Patriarch.

*Myself.* Perhaps the men have done regretable things, but surely you will not reject the women and children ?

*The Bishop.* I would rather they all perished than admit one of them to the hospital. They can all come in—if they will only acknowledge the Patriarch.

This was not the utterance of religious fanaticism. It was the voice of the dispossessed aristocrat, the dethroned legitimist.

The average Greek or Hellenised Vlach in Macedonia, who professes to believe that the whole population is Greek, is doubtless to a great extent the victim of his daily impressions. He lives in a town which is for the most part Hellenised. He never goes into the country. He does not know the villages or the village folk. But even the more educated and moderate Greek, who admits frankly that the Macedonians are Slavs, will add a claim on behalf of Greece to more territory than her sons inhabit, “in recognition of the civilising mission of Hellenism.” I confess to some difficulty in deciding what Hellenism means in this connection. What is the specific attitude of mind which it denotes ? What is the message which the modern Hellenes are struggling to convey to Macedonia ? What doctrine of sweetness and light is it which causes them to fight for the right to bury Vlachs, or to exclude Bulgarians from their

donia one sees no reason why it should have been less successful in maintaining itself than this Byzantine colony at Melnik. The conditions there—isolation, distance from the sea, and alien neighbours—seem sufficiently unfavourable. Its survival seems to suggest that there cannot have been much else to survive.

hospitals? The Church is the most prominent feature of modern Hellenism, and it seems to be as far from the old Hellenic spirit as it is from primitive Christianity. Moreover, it differs in nothing from the Russian, the Servian, or the Bulgarian Churches. Nor is there anything Hellenic in the Greek political ideals as one sees them in Greece—they are the ideals of the French Revolution, and the mother of the *Boulé* is not the Athenian democracy, but the British theory of constitutional monarchy and representative government. And, besides, the same spirit of democracy is incarnated quite as faithfully in free Bulgaria. It would be as hard to discover in the modern Greeks a trace of the ancient artistic spirit. Domestic architecture is no doubt an impossible luxury in Turkey, for a man who was daring enough to construct an imposing house would invite exactions and oppressions. But there is nothing to prevent the Greeks from constructing beautiful churches if only they possessed the instinct and the taste. Imposing and even costly churches one does see; as, for example, the new cathedral at Koritza, but it is vulgar to the last degree. There are ambitious new buildings in Athens, but their architects were Germans. The popular lithographs, the coloured prints of the late war, the illustrated newspapers in Athens, all of them belong to a level of perception which the poorest English village has outgrown. With music the case is even worse. The national manner of singing is a monotonous falsetto, indescribably dreary and unutterably tuneless. The Church music is no less undeveloped and painful, yet any one who has ever had the good fortune to hear a choir of Russian sailors or soldiers going through the same orthodox service, as I have heard them in Crete, knows what its artistic possibilities are in the hands of Slav barbarians. When one comes to ask, however, whether modern "Hellenism" includes a devotion to literature, it is rather harder to give a definite answer. Certainly the Greeks in Macedonia are not a reading people, but then under Turkish rule books are hard to come by. The Turkish censorship excludes not merely every book which contains a syllable that might be construed as a criticism on

Ottoman institutions or the Moslem religion; it bans on principle every book that suggests revolt against any established order or any recognised Church. Dante is forbidden, Pascal's "*Pensées*" are on the index, and a copy of "*Les Misérables*," which I once tried to smuggle in, was ruthlessly seized—but then the title may have led the customs official to mistake it for a treatise on the Macedonians. Such a system, as a Greek bookseller in Monastir naïvely explained to me, is "very discouraging for the trade." And the result was that he sold little beside school-books and the nastiest type of French boulevard novel—for moral corruption seems to be the one literary import which the censorship encourages. And yet I managed to find in his shop Tourgénéf's "*Sportsman's Sketches*" (in French), Voltaire's "*Candide*," and Lucian's "*Dialogues*." (There are clearly some gaps in the censor's theological hedge.) There must have been a public even in Monastir for these books. But perhaps the most significant thing about this bookshop was that while it contained a fair supply of such reading, and an unrivalled collection of grammars and phrase-books for the benefit of would-be emigrants to America, Austria, and Roumania, there was virtually nothing in modern Greek save calendars, catechisms, and school-books. The bookseller explained that he dared not import even Greek novels, and naturally all Athenian periodicals and newspapers—save an innocent sheet published under the censor's eye in Smyrna—are articles of contraband. Under such conditions it is hardly fair to criticise the achievements of Hellenism as a civilising agent in Turkey. But certainly it is significant of the national attitude, that while the Bulgarian schools are modern institutions devoted to science, commerce, and the modern languages, the Greek gymnasia favour a purely literary course. The main study is ancient Greek, and it is not an uncommon thing to meet a clerk or a country solicitor who can recite three or four plays, a speech or two of Demosthenes, and half the *Odyssey*.

That a race living under such arduous conditions, brutalised by Turkish oppression and internecine strife, endowed, moreover, with keen commercial instincts, should



prove itself in its schools so little utilitarian, argues a rare intellectual distinction and elevation. An unkindly critic might analyse the motives that make for this choice of studies, and find prominent among them a certain national vanity which sees in the great literature of the past only a sort of sanction for the overweening pretensions of the present. But the sense that they have a cloud of witnesses behind them in their ancestry, and the imagination which makes the great past a very living thing, is a worthy and splendid stimulus. Without it there would have been no Hellenic revival in the last century, and no war of independence. It lies at the root of that reckless and devoted patriotism which is the strongest passion of the typical Greek. On the other hand, this perpetual emphasis on the peculiar and exclusive past of the Greek race is the foundation of much of its prevailing Chauvinism. A Greek who has studied the classics conceives himself to be entitled to despise his "barbarian" neighbour, the Bulgar. The barbarian meanwhile has been busily and laboriously converting himself into a modern European. He has studied economics, or it may be natural science, in Geneva, while on the literary side the merest glance through a Russian grammar has sufficed to open up to him one of the greatest and most humane of modern literatures. For my part I am vandal enough to think Tolstoi a better influence than Demosthenes.

The Greeks, but for one fatal handicap, would probably be a literary people. They are before all else an imaginative race. They have quick instincts, vivid perceptions, and fluent speech. They think with the exaggeration, the emphasis of literature, they have the passion for expression. They are acutely aware of language, and grasp with ease the conception of style. But this nation of linguists, heirs to the speech of Attica, has as yet no language in which to express itself. Or, rather, it has two languages. There is, first, the popular Greek of daily life, the Romaic of the Levant. It is a vivid, expressive speech, full of pithy proverbs, apt idioms, and turns of phrase that betray a keen humour and an alert original power of observation. Its

structure is loose, simple, and analytic. Its vocabulary is copious, and much less weighted with foreign words than any other modern language, though it does, of course, betray by roots of Italian, Vlach, or Turkish origin the vicissitudes of the race which speaks it. It stands to ancient Greek much as Italian stands to Latin. It is a language with a character and a history of its own, which has developed, a living, organic thing, by its own genius and its own law. It has a literature, not perhaps of surprising force or beauty, but still possessed of some character and individuality. The folk-songs of the islands, and the war-songs of the Klephts and Armatoles reflect with simplicity, sincerity, and vigour, the vivid, eventful lives of the men who made Greece a nation. They sang as they spoke, in words that had a colour, a meaning, an emotional ring derived from the accidents and passions of their daily existence. Side by side with this free, natural language, there has grown up an artificial literary language. It is the descendant of the stilted jargon written by Byzantine schoolmen, and it owes its present authority to the propaganda of two great patriots who prepared the literary revival that preceded the war of independence. While the Klephts were singing their way to victory with their half-savage, half-heroic ballads in Romaic, Coraes and Regas, exiles in Paris and Vienna were inditing elaborate literary and political tracts in a pseudo-classic dialect of their own invention. In the glorious past they found the inspiration of revolt, and they sought to revive with Greek freedom a passable imitation of the old Greek language. It seemed patriotic to banish the words borrowed from Venetians or from Turks. It seemed barbarous to use the analytic forms of Romaic accidence and the loose constructions of Romaic syntax. A movement which invoked such potent words as dignity, patriotism, and the glorious past, had a speedy success. The result is that there is now one language for daily life and lyric poetry, and another for books, newspapers, advertisements, and formal speeches. The difference is not that between the written and spoken language of other countries. We all use a rather more

studied and periodic style in writing, avoid certain vulgarisms or neologisms, and employ without fear of pedantry a larger choice of words. The difference between Romaic and written Greek is a difference of vocabulary, of accidence, of syntax and even of phonetics. The card in the restaurant will offer you οἶνος λευκός and οἶνος μέλας with ἄρτος *ad lib.*, but the guests ask for ἄσπρο κρασί, μαῦρο κρασί and ψωμί (white wine, black wine and bread), and if by chance any one were to use the printed names, the waiter would treat the experiment as a sally of wit. I once had to send a telegram in which I made use of the words καινούριο σπίτι (new house). No sane Greek in speaking would ever use any other combination of words to indicate the same idea. But the clerk remonstrated. I must mean νέα οἰκία. And when I protested that I wished to telegraph, not in ancient but in modern Greek, he retorted that when he was at school he would have been thrashed at a first offence for writing σπίτι, and expelled for the second. And yet, despite its foreign origin, neither he nor any other living man in Greece ever dreamed of using in daily speech any word save σπίτι (hospitium). It is the name that the child uses for his home before he has been taught that the ancients had another. No peasant, and few women, would even know what οἰκία means. The one word has all the associations of the mother tongue; the other, for all that it is Hellenic, is foreign and unfamiliar, as colourless as an algebraic symbol. For literature the prohibition of the first word is disastrous. It means that it has at its disposal no word which stirs an emotional echo. It is as though we were to erase "home" from all our poetry and substitute "residence." The question of accidence is still more serious. Romaic is a language which uses inflections sparingly. It has lost the dative altogether, and even tends to discard the genitive, while it expresses most relations by a preposition governing the accusative. The brigand in the ballad said of the sixty Agas ἔκαψα τὰ χωριά τους (I burned their villages). The modern purist will write τῶν, or even αὐτῶν, which, as M. Psichari neatly puts it, is much as though a Frenchman were to try and improve *J'ai brûlé leur villages* by writing

*illorum villages.* Worst of all, there is no clear understanding as to how far this process of "purification" is to go. Each man is his own academy, and while Romaic has one clear way of expressing a simple idea, the purists are not agreed on the stilted formula which should take its place.<sup>1</sup> The only safe rule in writing Greek is never to be natural. The nearer you can come to the ancient language the better do you write, and every eccentricity of grammar becomes a beauty of style. The one canon of Greek style is not to write as the common people speak; and instead of seeking distinction in apt words, the purists find it in old ones; instead of aiming at dignity in beautiful rhythms, or in phrases that embody some fresh perception or original thought, they seek it in stilted and borrowed archaisms. Indeed, the process of reviving not so much Attic as Byzantine Greek, has gone so far that one marvels that it goes no further. The Archbishop of Athens once wrote a sort of circular pastoral to the newspapers pointing out that if they would only revive one ancient word every day, in the course of two or three years their vocabulary would be absolutely Attic. But somehow the common sense of the people seems to shrink from this final systematic effort. The results of all this pedantry upon literature have been as deplorable as one might expect. A literature which uses a language in which no real man ever expressed a human emotion is condemned to barrenness and insincerity. Goethe translated some Romaic ballads, but who would do as much for the Greek poets and novelists of to-day? The polite language is already so much a foreign tongue, that educated Greeks are more and more tending to adopt French both for conversation and for writing. French, at least, is a natural language, which is not at the mercy of pedants and patriots.

There is, of course, a reaction against all this folly, but it makes way but slowly, since it has against it not only the official forces of the Church, the schools, and universities, but also the instinctive vanity of the people. The Greeks

<sup>1</sup> See the excellent preface to Pernod's "Grammaire Grecque Moderne" (Garnier Frères).

who have attempted to write in the popular tongue mostly live abroad—M. Psichari in Paris, MM. Pallis and Michaelides ("A. Ephtaliotes") in Liverpool. They have been overwhelmed with abuse as bad patriots and illiterate vulgarians. M. Pallis' translation of the Gospels into Romaic even led to a bloody riot in Athens, and the Ministry of the day was expelled from office because it had dared to suppress the patriotic mob. There is now a party of young men who venture to use their own natural language, and if among them there should prove to be a man of genius who will write a book which will go into every Greek home and commend itself to the heart of the people as a national classic, the battle will be won. At present the field is vacant. The purists have produced no notable writer, and the common people, who simply do not understand the printed language, are totally indifferent to literature.

The bearing of this linguistic question on the progress of Hellenism in Macedonia is important. If the Greek peasant fails as a rule to learn the written language and reads it with difficulty, the case of the half-Hellenised Albanian, or Vlach, or Bulgarian, is desperate. If he is to attain education through the medium of Greek, he must learn not one foreign language but two. The talent for languages is innate among the Balkan races. Greek is spoken everywhere in the Levant, and to pick up a colloquial knowledge of spoken Romaic presents no great difficulty. The Bulgarian peasants round Castoria (or, to be more precise, the men among them) can all speak it more or less well, by dint of using all manner of non-Hellenic words and taking liberties with the grammar. The Levantines of English, French, or Italian origin in Smyrna, Salonica, and Constantinople come to speak it as a second mother-tongue. But it is equally useless to the peasant as an avenue to education and to the Levantine as a commercial *lingua franca*. For neither the one nor the other can write it. Indeed, to master Greek orthography one must be something of a classical scholar. To take only one illustration, the sounds which the ancients

expressed by *ou, ei, η, υ* and *ī* are now all pronounced *ēē*. The peasant or the foreigner who has picked up the language by ear neither knows how to represent these sounds in writing, nor can he easily recognise them in print. I knew a Bulgarian in Ochrida, a man who had been wealthy and was educated in a Greek gymnasium. We used to talk in Greek, and I imagined that he knew the language well, until one day he had occasion to write me a letter. There was literally not a word from beginning to end which he had contrived to spell correctly. I had another acquaintance, a Pole born in Salonica, a man of some parts with a decided talent for languages. He wrote both French and German correctly. He spoke in addition Italian, Hebrew-Spanish, Turkish, Bulgarian, and Greek, the last fluently and with some power of picturesque expression. But though he had lived all his life as a business man in a Greek commercial centre, he had shrunk from the labour of learning to write a language which should have been of immense use and value to him, and he did not even know the Greek alphabet. The consequence is that while Greek is spoken very generally, it is neither a satisfactory commercial medium, nor a popular vehicle for culture. The Vlach, the Albanian, or the Slav who acquires it has grave reasons to be disappointed with the benefits it gives him. The Greek Imperialist who aspires to see his language once more the recognised speech of all civilised men on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean forgets that the Hellenistic Greek of two thousand years ago was the vehicle of an original culture prepared by great grammarians.

It is a sorry transition to turn from this dream of a revived Hellenism which is to civilise the Near East once more, to the actualities of Greek politics. One may say of the Greeks with equal truth that they are capable of superb devotion to an idea, or that they are the ready victims of any catch-word or abstraction. "The Slav is the enemy" is a phrase which their journalists have been repeating to them for the last thirty years, and at length it has

obsessed them so powerfully that they have almost forgotten their own past and their heroic struggles against Turkish tyranny. They have been taught to believe that all Turkey south of the Balkans is theirs by right, and they can think of the Macedonian movement only as a sort of invasion of their inheritance planned by the enemy in Bulgaria, if not by Russia herself. That it can be a spontaneous Macedonian movement, that it is a real revolt against Turkish tyranny, they will not for a moment believe. It is for them only a plot by the foes of Greece against the sacred cause of Hellenism. It is from that egoistic standpoint that they hold themselves justified in combining with the Turks to resist "the Slav." For them these miserable peasants, taking arms under any leader who will promise them deliverance from the tax-collector and the *bey*, have no concrete existence. They are Slav, and "the Slav is the enemy." It is part of the Greek temperament that it does nothing by halves. They flung themselves into the new alliance with enthusiasm. In 1903 deputations of Greek officers actually visited the Turkish Minister in Athens to offer him their swords, and the Greek press wrote of Abdul Hamid as though he were a philosopher-king and a pillar of Hellenism. Bulgarian refugees captured in Thessaly were handed over to the Turkish police to be tortured in Turkish dungeons. The Patriarch issued an encyclical ordering his Bishops and priests to denounce the insurgents and their sympathisers to the Turkish officials. Every Greek consulate in Macedonia became a department of the Turkish secret police, and the work of espionage went on unchecked, even while the Turks were slaughtering the Hellenised Vlachs of Kruchevo. For to the Turk all Giaours are one. "There are white dogs and red dogs, but all of them are dogs." In fairness to the Greeks we must admit that this policy has been followed by their rivals in times past. M. Stambulov worked steadily for a Turco-Bulgarian *entente*, and undoubtedly he meant to use it against the Greeks. I have never heard that he carried it to such an extreme as this—the circumstances hardly arose—but there is a nasty story

which accuses him of encouraging M. Tricoupis to develop his plan for a Balkan coalition against Turkey, only to carry the scheme to Constantinople on the eve of its execution.<sup>1</sup> No sense of chivalry prevented the Bulgarians from profiting by the reverses of Greece in 1897. But apart from the morality of this Greek policy or the amount of provocation which might be held to justify it, it is an extremely foolish venture. It had no doubt a certain brief and superficial success. It was easy to force a Bulgarian notable to call himself a "Greek" by threatening to denounce him to the Turks, and the Archbishop of Castoria won many villages for the Patriarch in this way. When that failed, a Bishop had only to go on tour among the villages with an immense "escort" of Turkish troops, as the Bishops of Serres and Florina did, "converting" them by force. As a last resort, in one case at least, the Bishop of Serres even arrested a Bulgarian priest and kept him a prisoner in his own palace, only releasing him when he renounced the Exarch. But these are ephemeral triumphs. The "converted" villages still maintain their sly commerce with the Committee, still harbour "bands," still talk Bulgarian. And assuredly they do not love "Hellenism" the more. Worst of all, the loyal Greek and Vlach villages are puzzled and impatient. They saw their Slav neighbours marching out to fight the traditional enemy, and they wished to join them. "You know we too have rifles, and we want to use them," said a young man of Klissoura to me one day. "Against whom?" I asked. "Why, against the Turks, of course. We are only waiting for Greece to tell us to move." And he went on, in the same tongue, the same accents that the mountaineers of Crete have used so often in my hearing, to explain how intolerable life was under Turkish rule. The policy which prompted Greece to use the occasion only to weaken Bulgaria while the chance of freedom slipped by, was quite beyond his comprehension. He, too, wanted autonomy, and he could not understand

<sup>1</sup> This tale may be a calumny. M. Tricoupis always denied that he had attempted to bring about an alliance with Bulgaria (see Nicolaïdes, "La Macédoine," p. 203).



why Greece should claim it for Crete and oppose it in Macedonia. It is only the official or the educated Greek who prefers anarchy and the *status quo* to any surrender of the grotesque territorial claims of Hellenism over the Bulgarian interior. The average Greek official vowing in one breath that all the Macedonians are Greeks, and declaring in the next that he would rather have them massacred than governed by a Bulgarian majority, is painfully like the false mother in Solomon's judgment, who was quite ready to allow the other woman's child to be cut in two.

The immediate result of the Greek policy of espionage and denunciation, so lightly planned in Athens and Constantinople, was to expose the Greeks of Macedonia—or, to be more accurate, the villagers of the Greek party—to the fury and revenge of the Bulgarian Committee. If a Bishop had frightened a village into joining the Patriarchist Church by holding the fear of the Turks over its head, it was always possible for the next Bulgarian band which came that way to compel it to return to the Exarchist schism, by threatening to burn it to the ground. The one method was as legitimate as the other, and quite as efficacious. If a Greek priest in obedience to his Bishop's instructions had betrayed a group of insurgents to the Turks, there were always comrades left to come round and hang him from the nearest tree. The next stage in the evolution of party feeling was naturally that the Greeks came to think of the Bulgarians as wild beasts, who slaughtered from mere lust of blood. Legitimists always, they seemed to regard their own work of denunciation as an unexceptionable use of the weapons of law and order. The Bulgarians, after all, are rebels, and the Greeks as loyal subjects of Abdul Hamid were only setting the machinery of justice in motion. The Turks, however, have failed to protect them, and they had to devise some more effective plan for defending themselves. The scheme was to organise counter-bands to hold the Bulgarians in check. I had the chance to meet in Monastir in March, 1904, the emissary from the Greek Government who was preparing this scheme. He was travelling as a

cattle-dealer under an assumed name, but I had known him first in a European university where we were undergraduates together, and again in the East. He comes of an influential family, and is himself a man of a certain magnetism and wayward talent, who has had some experience as a guerilla chief. The climate of Macedonia seemed to have transformed him. He talked his French, his English, and his German as fluently as ever, but the ideas he expressed—as far as the pale vocabulary of these languages would allow him—were the ideas of his Phanariot ancestors. In the name of Hellenism he proposed to make of Macedonia a shambles and a desert. Where the Bulgarians had murdered one man, he declared, he would slaughter ten. He shrank only from one thing—he would not imitate what he described as the “anarchist” methods of the Committee. He would not arm his men with dynamite. But all manner of straightforward bloodiness with lead and steel came into his programme. And yet he was firmly convinced that he was fighting for “culture,” for “ideas,” for “a superior civilisation,” against the Bulgarian “wolves.”<sup>1</sup> The earth might be a very tolerable place to live in, if every abstract word could be eliminated from human speech. Mephistopheles must have been fresh from a visit to the Balkans when he told Jehovah that mankind have used the reason which He gave them to become more beast-like than any beast.

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This armed Greek propaganda, planned in the spring of 1904, has since been developed with much energy and a total disregard for humane scruples, and its result has been

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of history the Greeks have been neither more nor less humane than other Balkan people. The War of Independence was a dialogue of massacre in which outrage answered to outrage. The Cretans perpetrated a wholesale massacre at the expense of the Moslem minority in the eastern (Sitia) districts of the island in 1897. I saw with my own eyes young Moslem girls who had escaped mutilated from these horrors. During the Thessalian campaign of 1897 I was present when an Evzone regiment strung up a Turkish prisoner by his heels from a tree, and proceeded to lay a fire of wood and straw under his head. Fortunately he promised to give them valuable information before the fire was actually lit, and at that moment some Italian officers of the Foreign Legion appeared on the scene.

that, despite the self-restraint of the Bulgarian Committee and the reforming efforts of the Powers, Macedonia has passed during some eighteen months through a period of anarchy without parallel in its recent annals. Officially, the object of the Greeks in establishing bands was defensive: they intended to reply to Bulgarian violence by a counter terrorism, to maintain their footing in the country and to protect the lives and property of their adherents. In point of fact they have conducted an aggressive warfare against all the other Christian elements, Bulgarians, Vlachs, and even Albanians, with the object of checking every national movement save their own, and of conquering for Hellenism as much of the country as they can overrun. Their methods have been assassination and even massacre, while their task has been facilitated by the tolerance and the connivance of the Turks. Unlike the Bulgarians, they have established no local organisation. Their work is controlled by the "Macedonian Syllogos" of Athens, which enjoys within certain limits the approval of the Greek Government; and its agents in Macedonia have been the Greek Bishops and consuls. Their bands consisted of mercenaries, well paid and well armed, recruited in Crete, in Smyrna, and in the Greek kingdom. Few of them were composed to any large extent of Macedonians, but in some cases, even by the admission of Greek newspapers, they enrolled local Turks. The leaders were often officers of the Greek army, but the more successful among them seem to have been brigand-chiefs from the mountains of Olympus and the Greek frontier. In two instances they were old Bulgarian leaders who had quarrelled with the Committee and accepted Greek pay. They have worked on a large scale, passing the Greek frontier without difficulty, and even effecting a descent by sea upon the coast of Chalcidice. Sometimes they came into conflict with Bulgarian bands, but as in these cases the newspapers of both sides have usually claimed the victory, it is difficult to ascertain the truth. Their instructions were to avoid encounters with the Turks, and usually there has been no difficulty on this head. Sometimes the Turkish officers were bribed; in two

cases they received the Greek decoration of the Order of the Redeemer. A few skirmishes have none the less taken place (notably one in which Captain Melas was killed), but usually by mistake, and these ended for the most part in the surrender of the Greeks, and a trial for form's sake, followed by a few months' imprisonment.

But the aim of these bands is not military: they are engaged in "propaganda," and here they have achieved a very considerable success. They murdered the Albanian priest of Negovan for the crime of translating the Greek liturgy into Albanian. They have executed a fair number of Vlach priests and teachers because they attempted to say Mass or teach the children in Roumanian. The Bulgarian population has been reduced by some hundreds, and a large number of Vlach (Roumanian) villages have been "converted" from their schism and enrolled once more in the Greek Church.<sup>1</sup> To employ violence against Bulgarians was, after all, only to adopt the law of retaliation, but the Vlachs have done nothing to provoke such usage. They, at least, have never enrolled bands or essayed terrorism.

An extract from a Greek newspaper *Empros*, September 5, 1905, which happens to be edited by the acting president of the Macedonian Syllogos, describes with a naïve euphemism the evangelical methods which the apostles of Hellenism and Orthodoxy have employed to convert the Bulgarian peasantry.

"We have just learned a most important piece of news from an entirely reliable source. A Helleno-Macedonian band, composed of eighty men commanded by the chiefs Vlakouris and Thiaphis, arrived last Saturday in the schismatic village of Mokreni. It carried off twenty-five schismatics and took them to a place near Mount Kouri. From this centre the two chiefs despatched an order to the villagers of Mokreni commanding them to send the priest and the headman of the village, under a threat to massacre the twenty-

<sup>1</sup> "Captain Boukovala has caused several Roumanising villages in the Caza of Yenidje to return to Orthodoxy" (the *Skrip*, Athens, August 31, 1905).

"Thanks to the action of the Chief Akridas and his band, the Roumanising population of Selion, Vlacolivadon and of the villages round Vodena has rejected the alluring propositions of the Roumanian propaganda and returned to Orthodoxy" (the *Athenai*, August 31, 1905).

five hostages unless their order was instantly obeyed. The priest and the headman arrived shortly afterwards in the camp. Captain Vlakouris made them a long speech in which he required them to return to Orthodoxy with all their flock. The priest, the headman, and the prisoners were fired with such enthusiasm by the words of Captain Vlakouris that they swore to renounce their schism. On receiving this assurance the captain released them all. Next day the Greek band returned to the village and was received with the utmost cordiality. A *Te Deum* was sung in the Greek Church, which up to that moment had been closed, and at the end of the ceremony all the villagers swore an oath of fidelity to Orthodoxy. Captain Vlakouris, after leaving twelve of his men in the village of Mokreni, set out with the rest of his band for Zelenitch and Aetos, two villages which he also proposes to bring back to Orthodoxy."

To reconstruct this scene it is necessary to remember that Mokreni is a purely Bulgarian village, that its men proved their devotion by taking a share in the Bulgarian rising of 1903, that it was then burned to the ground by the Turks, and that it lies at the foot of the mountain on which stands Klissoura, in sight of a Turkish garrison and a Turkish sub-prefect. It would be possible, no doubt, to parallel such performances as this from the annals of the Bulgarian bands, but they, after all, confined themselves to "converting" their own compatriots; they have never attempted to terrorise genuine Greek villages in this fashion. Moreover, the Greeks have resorted to wholesale massacre as the Bulgarians have never done. There are few Bulgarian villages in the debatable central districts which have not been visited during the year 1905 by some Greek band which has left behind it its twos and threes or its ten or a dozen of schismatic corpses,<sup>1</sup> sacrificed in the process of the ceremony of conversion. The *chef d'œuvre* of this Hellenic campaign was achieved at Zagoritchani, a large Bulgarian village near Klissoura, which, like Mokreni, took a leading part in the rising of 1903, and like Mokreni was burned by the Turks. A Greek band, which is said to have numbered over two hundred men under three Greek officers in uniform, surprised it by night (April 6-7, 1905) by using

<sup>1</sup> Seventeen were massacred at Kladorobi, eight killed and fifteen wounded at Zelenitch.

bugle calls which led the villagers to suppose that Turkish regulars were manœuvring in the neighbourhood. They burned ten houses, and twenty-eight of the temporary homes erected amid the ruins of the last conflagration. They wounded seven persons and killed no less than sixty, among them seven women, twenty-two persons over sixty years of age, and five children under fifteen.<sup>1</sup> There was a good deal of evidence to show that the local Turkish authorities were privy to this massacre, and some circumstances seemed to inculcate the Archbishop of Castoria. It is quite clear that no conflict or provocation preceded what was simply a deliberate massacre, and the only reason for choosing Zagoritchani was that it is an eager and patriotic Bulgarian centre, and that it had disobeyed the summons of the Greek Archbishop to return to the Patriarchist fold.<sup>2</sup> The programme of the Greek organisa-

<sup>1</sup> I have had corroboration of these figures and of the other details given above in a private letter from a gentleman who had seen the reports of the Italian gendarmerie officer and the Civil Agents.

<sup>2</sup> The *Roumanie* of Bucharest has published the text of a circular found by the Turks in some documents seized on the person of a Greek prisoner. It reads like a genuine Greek document, and its authenticity has not been questioned by the Greek organs. It is said to bear the seal of the Greek Committee.

"Brave defenders of Hellenism, I address you to-day in order to express the gratitude which the entire nation feels for all you have done and will yet do on behalf of the Fatherland. Continue the struggle against the Bulgarian assassins, and neglect no means of proving to the whole world that Macedonia is purely Greek. Exterminate the priests, the teachers, and the notables who compose the Bulgarian Committees. It is at length time to put in practice the saying: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. When it is a question of taking vengeance we must not spare the Bulgarians, even when they hide under the robes of a priest. Burn, shoot, assassinate, and purify the soil of Macedonia from all that is Exarchist. The Supreme Panhellenic Committee has decided to intensify the struggle by making use of your arms, O valiant combatants, and if for some time past the Committee has hardly seemed equal to the occasion, the reason is that official Greece hesitates. But what is official Greece to us, when we have the approbation of the whole Hellenic world? Forward, then, until you have wiped out the last Bulgarian in our Macedonia. Your names will be inscribed in letters of fire in the annals of the race. May Heaven grant that the day be near when the sun of Hellenism will shine on Macedonia; then there will be peace for us and for the Turks, with whom we stand on the best of terms. Let our motto be: Purge Macedonia of the Bulgars." I quote from M. Gaulis' admirable paper, *La Macédoine*.

tion is clearly to prove that Macedonia is Greek by exterminating the Bulgarians. The worst of this practical ethnography is that it leaves so many corpses to testify to the contrary thesis. Both sides have resorted on occasion to Machiavellian tactics; both sides have been guilty of savagery. But the Bulgarians at least have not committed the crime of *lèse-liberté*; and the Greeks alone, strangers and mercenaries engaged in the conquest of an alien people, have imitated Turkish methods of massacre.<sup>1</sup> It is as always the peasantry who suffer. By the autumn of 1905 a reign of terror had settled down on the whole of Central Macedonia. Tillage was interrupted, the roads deserted, and round Vodena the population of no less than nine Bulgarian villages had abandoned their homes and flocked into the town in search of some refuge from the Greek bands. Were these people martyrs and fanatics by choice, their miseries might have their ideal compensations. But half the men and most of the women would welcome tranquillity beneath any flag, and call themselves Manchus or Hottentots if under these names they might plough their fields undisturbed and tramp to market without fear of assassination.

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It is not in Macedonia that the Greeks are seen to the best advantage. There they have degenerated into a race of townsmen, who form an ignoble aristocracy of talent, half clerical, half commercial, which exploits an alien peasantry that it despises. The true Greek is to be sought in the Highlands and the Isles. I could wish that my acquaintance with the Greeks had ended in Crete. There one still

<sup>1</sup> The assassination of Vlachs by the Greek bands aroused the most violent indignation in Roumania. The Roumanians are not quite so much inured to blood as the Greeks and Bulgarians, and they have always conducted their propaganda by the clean and benevolent method of bribery. They retaliated by expelling some Greek subjects from Roumania. A diplomatic conflict followed, and in October, 1905, peaceful relations were broken off. Happily a war is physically impossible, but Greek commerce in Roumania is certain to be very heavily punished. Some good has come already from this situation, since orders have been issued from Athens forbidding the Greek braves for the future to murder Vlachs.

may meet a Greek people, primitive, lovable, wedded to the soil, whose courtesy, hospitality, and native dignity centuries of oppression have not perverted. Living in daily commerce with the mountains and the sea-breezes, waging a warfare that knew no compromise with their secular enemy the Turk, they know nothing of those elaborate disloyalties, those perverting feuds which have corroded the honour and the humanity of their Continental brethren. For them Hellenism is a simple ideal of liberty, untainted by policy, unstained by any base alliance. It is no matter of controversy or polemics. It is a legend, a faith to which even the powers of nature do homage. Their very fairies are Greeks, and the very winds that toss their barks are the servants of Hellenism and its hero Alexander. When their fishing-boats are buffeted by the wind—so the island folk believe—the Queen of the Nereids, who is Alexander's sister, dances in the foam about their prow, anxious and troubled of mien. But the seamen look her in the face and answer her dumb inquiry with the age-old formula, "Thy brother Alexander lives and reigns." And so it is. Where Hellenism is still married to its barren rocks and the waves that cradled it, it lives triumphant and unspoiled. Its decadence is only in the ghettos and bazaars and the breathless city lanes.

#### § GREEK STATISTICS.

A favourite line of argument with Greeks is based upon a comparison of their school-statistics with those of the Bulgarians. This is really a very elaborate sophistication which requires some space to unravel. They claim that in what they are pleased to call "Macedonia" there are 998 "Greek" schools attended by 59,600 pupils, as against 561 Bulgarian schools attended by 18,300 pupils. These figures may or may not be accurate, but the following considerations rob them of any importance.

(1) The definition of "Macedonia" is quite arbitrary. The Greeks mean by the term the two vilayets of Salonica and Monastir. This is at once too much and too little. It includes the purely Albanian districts of Elbasan and Koritza, where the Christians, although they attend "Greek" Orthodox schools, are all Albanians. It excludes the vilayet of Uskub, obviously because it would be hard to find in it a single native Greek family. It is, with the exception of the Albanian and Servian districts of the west, entirely Bulgarian.

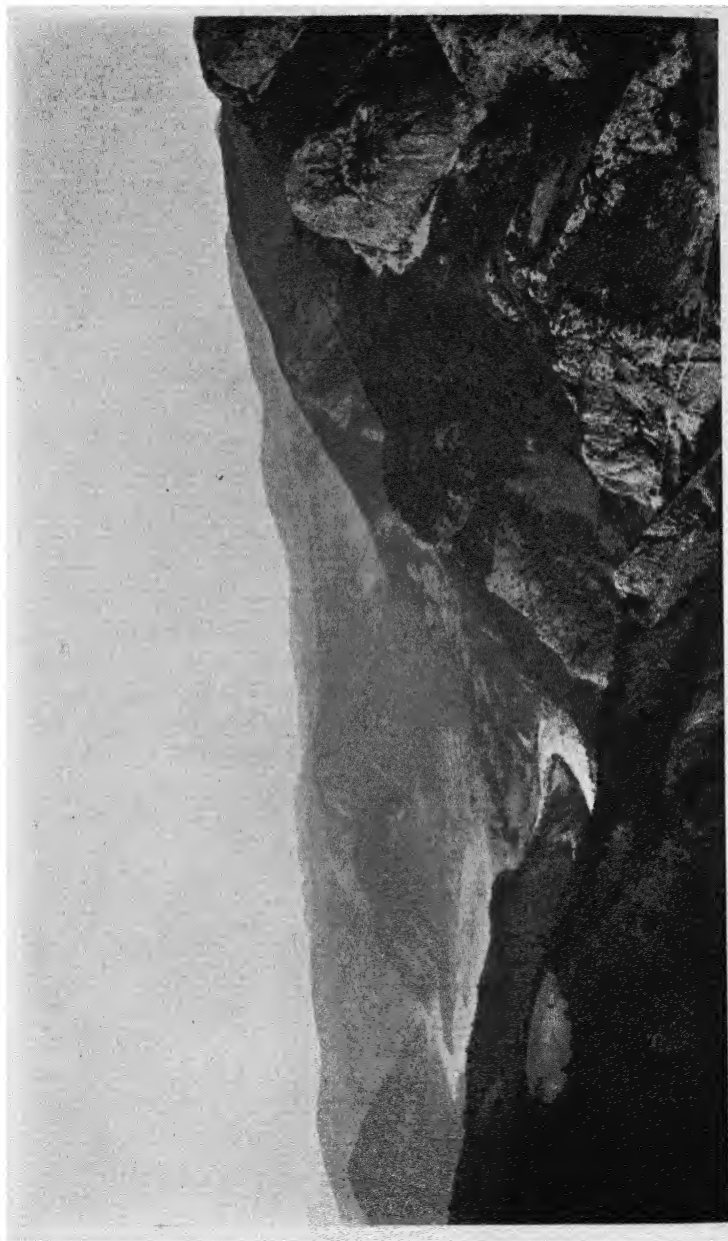


(2) Even in the two selected vilayets the population of the "Greek" villages of the central districts is either Slav or Vlach; and even children who have attended a "Greek" school frequently leave it with no real knowledge of the language.

(3) The fact that a Slav village possesses only a "Greek" school does not even prove that its sympathies are Greek. Smerdesh, for example, which is ardently Bulgarian in politics, is still almost wholly "Greek" in culture. The Greeks have every historical advantage, and it is safer for a prudent village to profess itself patriarchist. If it becomes Exarchist it at once exposes itself to the suspicion if not to the persecution of the Turkish authorities.

(4) The Greeks are the wealthy town population, and in addition they possess the accumulated wealth of the monasteries, so that wherever a village will accept a "Greek" school they have the means to plant one. The Bulgarians, on the other hand, are a rude peasant people, with less need of education, less desire for it, and less wealth with which to procure it. A large proportion of their villages are still without any school worthy of the name, and I have known villages where not a single inhabitant could read or write. But the most potent factor in delaying the development of the Bulgarian schools is the hostility of the Turks, from which the Greeks do not suffer.





AN ALBANIAN LANDSCAPE (ON THE ROAD FROM OCHRIDA TO ELIASAN)

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ALBANIANS

#### § I.—THE ALBANIAN CHARACTER.

THERE is no race in European Turkey which enjoys collectively a reputation quite so unenviable as that of the Albanians. They are the *bêtes noires* of the Embassies, the scapegoats of the Porte. If anywhere the Turks are engaged in punitive operations, it is a mere matter of routine that some or all of the Ambassadors should protest against the employment of Albanian troops. If anywhere excesses have been committed which even the Sultan cannot deny, the inevitable excuse is that the Albanians "got out of hand." One suspects that the first exercise of a diplomatic tyro is to draft these warnings with the dates blank for future use, and the first essay of a probationer in the Grand Vizier's office to turn the hackneyed exculpatory phrases with the requisite note of surprised and horrified humanity. For a century past this ill name was the only herald which brought the Albanians to the knowledge of the West. We heard of them when their massacres threatened to exterminate the Greek race in the Morea. We heard of them when France and England intrigued for the friendship of Ali Pasha, each fascinated by his reputation for superhuman cruelty and cunning. We heard of them again as the race whose exactions and oppressions in "Old Servia" vie with the performances of the Kurds in Armenia. And the Blue-Book (1904) which recorded the atrocities in Macedonia and Adrianople fits the Albanian name once more into the familiar context of execration and complaint.

Of all their vague political aspirations and obscure strivings nothing seems to have been known save the one damning fact that they had risen to protest against the reforms. It has been their fate to hide their virtues under an *alias*, and to commit only their crimes and errors in their own name. Whether as Christians or as Moslems their lot has been to win laurels for other races. How much of the great legend of the Greek War of Independence would remain if the share which the Christian Albanians had in it were subtracted? When one thinks of that various struggle, sometimes savage, sometimes heroic, two chapters emerge which have specially seized the imagination of Europe—the wars of Suli against Ali Pasha, and the exploits of the seamen of Hydra against the Turkish navy. Both the Suliotes and Hydriotes were Albanians in blood, language, and customs. They were “Greeks” only in the sense that the Vlachs are “Greeks”—they belonged to the Orthodox Church, and if any of them possessed any culture at all, it was Greek culture. The Suliotes were a predatory tribe, rather better organised and more homogeneous than most Albanian septs, and their manners had not been softened by their nominal Christianity. The Hydriotes were simply pirates. The heroism and tenacity which both displayed as their normal opposition to the Turks deepened under Greek influence into a struggle for political liberty, have cast a lustre and a glory upon the whole war which ought by every law of historical justice to modify the judgment which civilisation has passed upon the Albanians. As the Christian Albanians have worked for the greater glory of the Hellenic idea, so the Mohamedan Albanians have contributed to such sympathy as the Turks can still command in the West. The word “Turk” in our language has a racial rather than a religious connotation. But in the languages of the East it is simply a synonym for Mohamedan. The Greeks, for example, even speak of the Moslems of Crete as “Turks,” although they are Hellenes by race and language who can rarely speak more than a very few words of Turkish. And so it is with the Albanians. All over Turkey they are to be found in positions which bring them into

contact with Europeans. They are sometimes governors, often military officers, while the typical trade of the lower class is that of *cavass*, *i.e.*, armed servant, half courier, half bodyguard, in the pay of some European or wealthy native. The superb men in picturesque garb, decorated with a bewildering variety of weapons, who lounge at the doors of consulates and banks, who carry money or messages, or hire themselves out to escort travellers, are invariably Albanians. But because they are nominal Moslems the hasty traveller classes them as Turks, and goes home to spread abroad the fame of their fidelity, their self-respect, their courage, and their sense of honour—qualities which somehow transform themselves into so many arguments for the continuance of Ottoman rule. I once travelled over one of the Macedonian railway lines with a young Englishman of wealth and position who was making a tour of the Near East as a preparation for a parliamentary career. He had no very settled convictions, but at every turn of the conversation he broke into eulogies of the individual "Turk." At last I asked him on what he based his judgment. "Well," was the answer, "look at my servant." The man turned out to be a characteristic Albanian—tall, handsome, and doubtless as honest and brave as his eyes were frank and fearless, while his whole bearing conveyed that suggestion of mingled courtesy and independence which makes the peculiar charm of his race. It seemed a hard fate that his fine qualities should all the while be winning a partisan for an Asiatic despotism which every good Albanian despises and detests.

For in sharp contrast to the reputation which the Albanians have won for themselves collectively, is the regard in which they are held as individuals not only by Europeans but by other native races in the Balkans. As tribesmen they may be inveterate and reckless brigands, whose annual incursions into the richer regions of the Macedonian borderland are the natural consequence of their contempt for any tool save the rifle. As soldiers they are the terror alike of their Turkish officers, whom they despise, and of the Christian populations, whom they terrorise.

But let them once abandon the profession of arms and immediately their simple feudal virtues seem to win them patrons and even admirers. They are valued all over Macedonia as masons or navvies—these men who would scorn to turn a sod in their own country. They are cunning craftsmen, and in silver work display not only dexterity but taste. In positions of trust their honesty is as proverbial as their courage. The most timid Levantine merchant will confide to them his money and his life if only they have given their word to be true. The unsophisticated Turkish peasant—a very different man from the nondescript Moslem Levantine of the towns—is usually both honest and truthful, but one feels that his virtues spring in no small degree from his notorious lack of enterprise and imagination. The key to the Albanian temperament is, on the other hand, a sensitive and somewhat aggressive pride. At its lowest it is a picturesque and amiable vanity, at its best it is a fine self-respect. He has the same quickness of wit, the same tense nerves as the Greek, and the same spirit of enterprise. But his pride saves him alike from cowardice and from meanness. He will rob openly and with violence, but he will not steal. He will torture an enemy, but he will not touch a woman. If he swaggers and boasts and puts a certain truculence into his very dress, he has much too high an opinion of himself to lie meanly in self-defence. He has the traditions of a race which has fought for the Turk as his mercenaries, but has never accepted his domestic rule without protest. An Albanian's sense of honour is not entirely external. He will murder you without remorse if he conceives that you have insulted him—as Turkish officers and Russian consuls have learned to their cost—and if the murderer, a lonely outlaw, should find his way even to a strange and possibly hostile tribe, it will fight to the last man rather than surrender him to the authorities.<sup>1</sup> But he

<sup>1</sup> It is pretty generally understood in Turkey that it is death to strike an Albanian. But occasionally a Turkish officer forgets himself. A case occurred at Vodena in the summer of 1904, and the whole garrison went into mutiny until it had found and slaughtered the erring lieutenant.

is equally punctilious about his own pledged word. To keep it he will face any risk himself, and to help him to keep it, his tribe will think no sacrifice extravagant. It is extremely mediæval, no doubt, this Albanian sense of honour, but if it has the crudity and bloody-mindedness, it has also the chivalry and something of the inward dignity of the knightly spirit.

An incident which made a profound impression on me will serve to show better than any testimony in general terms what is the usual attitude towards the Albanians of those who know them best. It was necessary in the course of the relief work undertaken by the British Fund in Macedonia last winter to send large sums of money in gold from Monastir to Ochrida, Resna, and other places where we had centres. The usual method was to send our Albanian *cavass*, a lad named Hassan, on horseback over the mountains with his rifle on his shoulder and the money in his belt. No one ever seemed to question his trustworthiness. He carried first small sums and then large, and there was never a penny missing. He had arrived one day in Ochrida with a matter of £400, and he stood while I counted it with his air of ingenuousness and quiet self-confidence which suggested an English public schoolboy rather than a Balkan peasant. It was a face that no one could fail to trust, kindly and gentle yet spirited, with its blue eyes and the blonde hair that might have been English or Norse. The money was right, as usual, and something which we had to discuss caused me to ask Hassan if he knew the whereabouts of a certain house in Ochrida—rambling city of dark lanes and deserted byways, half ruins, half streets. He smiled at the question. He knew every inch of the town. There was something humorous in the twinkle of his eye which made me ask how that could be. He came from a distant part, and had lived for a year or two in Monastir. And then, frank, unblushing, and delightfully natural, he gave the answer, "I was with Shahin." I found myself instinctively, stupidly fearing for the money-bags on the table, for Shahin (the falcon) was the most notable of all the brigands in the countryside, a



sort of Robin Hood, who robbed with art and murdered with irony. He was in some sort the uncrowned tyrant of these regions. Young gallants who could not win a consent from an unsympathetic parent to a match with the lady of their heart went to Shahin to force it. He once held up to ransom a Protestant missionary whose brother was in the very house in which we were sitting. Every village had its own tale of Shahin's justice or Shahin's cruelty. And Hassan had been a member of his band, learning the topography of Ochrida in midnight raids and ambushes at dawn.

I told the story to a friend. "Why should you distrust the lad?" said he. "Brigandage is a profession like another. While he was a brigand he was true to the band; while he is in your service he will be true to you." And indeed Hassan himself had made his avowal much as an English youth might have said, "I served in the Imperial Yeomanry" or "I was with Baden-Powell." But most significant of all was the laconic question with which a Bulgarian Bishop replied to my inquiry. "Would you trust him?" I asked. "He is an Albanian. Is he not?" was the answer. For centuries the Slavs and the Albanians have been in deadly, unremitting feud. And here was the comment of one enemy on the character of the other.

Hassan was a peasant and a Mohamedan. But we had even better opportunities of gauging the qualities of other Albanians, who belonged to every Christian sect and to the most various levels of culture. There was no intention or consciousness behind it, but none the less when I count over the natives who assisted us in one capacity or another in our seven relief *dépôts*, I find that there were fifteen Albanians and only six of other races, and of these six only two were in responsible positions, and one of the two proved to be unsuitable. Of the fifteen Albanians, only one ever earned the lightest reprimand, and though they handled many thousands of pounds among them, I would guarantee the scrupulous honesty of every man of them. I remember going on my arrival to one of the Protestant missionaries to ask him to recommend me

some honest assistants for the purchase and distribution of food, blankets, clothing, &c. He was quite sure that he could do so—Protestantism in his eyes was the one guarantee of honesty. When his list was complete I noticed that every name in it was Albanian, which was odd, since the Protestant mission is supposed to be a mission to Bulgarians. The Catholic priest was equally sure that honesty is incompatible with Eastern Christianity, and he too was ready to produce the one honest native in Monastir, of course, a Catholic. When it turned out that this man also was an Albanian, I felt no small relief. Here at length is a race which neither religion nor education can corrupt. In the end our Albanian staff included Moslems, "Greeks," Protestants, and Catholics. I think one of the bravest men I have ever known was one of the Protestants. He had a superb physique, but he had been born in a town and had never carried arms. At the time when the Turkish authorities in Castoria were molesting the Bulgarian peasants who came into our hospital, beating some of them, detaining others, and carrying off a few against their will to the Turkish ambulance, I sent this man to take his stand at the gate of the town, and inform me at once if any violence was offered to our *protégés*. He had not long to wait, but instead of losing time while he ran for me, he dealt with the situation himself. He marched boldly, unarmed "Giaour" though he was, into the midst of the Turkish soldiers and gendarmes, rescued the Bulgarian peasants by main force and escorted them triumphantly to our hospital. The possession of a rifle will often make a man of a Bulgarian insurgent, but only an Albanian could have showed such courage as this, unarmed, against a crowd of Turks with weapons. But there are in the Albanian nature even rarer capacities than this. Honesty and courage in different degrees are the possession of all true mountaineers. The Albanian Sisters of the Order of St. Vincent de Paul, who worked at Monastir under the direction of a French superior, and in our Castoria hospital under an English lady, Sister Augustine, gave proof of a rare devotion. Born in a country where no woman dreams of any sphere outside

the home that is almost a harem, they had imbibed all the spirit of practical charity and disciplined kindness which distinguishes their Order. They shrank neither from exposure nor infection nor fatigue, and no European lady with centuries of civilisation behind her could have been more gentle or more sympathetic. They all came from the wild regions of Northern Albania, and I suppose the men of the families they had renounced are still savages in all essentials. And yet it was always with an effort that one realised that these women, who spoke a cultivated French and thought in terms of Western Christianity, were the sisters and daughters of Gheg clansmen. Their religion was to them a daily comfort and an exalted stimulus, and one felt in their presence that if the Catholic Church can extend its work of education, even the most benighted region of Albania may have a future.

## § II.—LANGUAGE AND HISTORY.

Of the origin and history of the Albanians it is difficult to write much that has meaning with any certainty. One fact only is fairly well established—that they are not newcomers. The Greeks, anxious to identify them with a race akin to the Hellenes, declare with conviction that they are the descendants of the Pelasgi of antiquity. But who were the Pelasgi? They must have been known to the Romans under the generic name of Illyrians, a race as intractable and as impervious to civilisation as are the modern inhabitants of Albania. Doubtless, too, the Southern Albanians are to some extent the descendants of the Epirotes who followed Pyrrhus. It matters little whether we identify them with the Pelasgi, the Epirotes, the Macedonians, or the Illyrians. They are, at all events, a race which never possessed a civilisation of its own, never completely assimilated the culture of its neighbours, and always led, in spite of Greek schools or Roman roads, the same wild tribal life in the same inaccessible mountains. Ethnologically it belongs to the Indo-European group, and probably it migrated to its present fastnesses before the Italian

and the Hellenic branches, which are its nearest kinsmen. The Albanian language, despite marked dialectical variations, is essentially the same wherever it is spoken—as far north as the Montenegrin border or as far south as the Gulf of Arta. It is unquestionably an Aryan language, sufficiently distinct both from Slav and from Greek, and superficially at least more nearly akin to Latin than to Greek. But it has borrowed so much from all the tongues with which it has been in contact that it is difficult to tell at a glance how many of these manifestly Aryan words it brought from the Aryan home, and how many it has recovered in recent centuries. An educated Southern Albanian employs as many obviously Greek words as a Hellenised Vlach, while a Northern Albanian exerts his predatory talents upon Italian and Servian.

There are great differences between the Albanian dialects of the south (Tosk) and those of the north (Gheg), and oddly enough the Gheg is said to be the softer and more musical speech. To my ear, I confess, both sound equally harsh and unattractive. These differences are perhaps rather less considerable than one would expect when one remembers that neither dialect has been reduced to writing before the present generation, that each borrows its abstract terms from an alien language unknown to the other, and that in this land of mountains and brigandage there is very little communication between north and south. A patriotic Albanian will always declare that a Gheg and Tosk understand each other without much difficulty. I am a little distrustful of this assurance, but undoubtedly as the language tends to be standardised and cultivated it must also become more universally comprehensible. It is also a very disputable point whether ethnologically the Albanians are really a single stock. Physically there are marked differences among them. The northerners are tall, there are many blondes among them, and they are said to be exceptionally broad-headed. They seem indeed outwardly indistinguishable from the Montenegrins and other Servian highlanders. They are active and muscular, but they are lightly built and narrow-shouldered. The Ghegs wear a

tight-fitting costume, which gives them an appearance of slenderness. The national costume of the Tosks is the kilt or *fustanella* of white linen which has been adopted in the Greek army. Both these costumes are characteristic and national—the white cloth of the Ghegs with its black embroideries that suggest on the lithe limbs of the men who wear it something of the fearful symmetry and the bold marking of a tiger, no less than the more famous *fustanella*. It is possible that these diverse costumes point to some quite distinct origin, and the language, odd, capricious, and so distinct from other Aryan tongues, may, after all, be an amalgam formed from the aboriginal tongues of these different stocks. But that is a remote speculation. It is sufficient to note that within historical times the Albanians have undergone a good deal of mixing that can be verified. The Vlachs are nowhere so numerous as in Jannina and along the southern spurs of the Pindus range. They refuse, as a rule, to intermarry with Slavs, but have no scruple about contracting a union with Albanians. Greek influence has nearly always been paramount in Epirus, and Jannina was the seat of a Byzantine principality which became independent after the capture of Constantinople by the Latins during the Fourth Crusade. At this period the population, at all events of the towns, must have submitted to some infusion of Hellenic blood. The coast of Epirus must also have come under a strong Hellenic influence. It is related, for example, of Parga, an interesting and vigorous mercantile town built over the Adriatic on an impregnable rock, which retained its independence under Venetian protection until it was surrendered by England to Ali Pasha at the close of the Napoleonic war, that its inhabitants wore the peculiar costume of the Cretans and the other Greek islanders. But even more powerful than the Greek was the Servian influence. Scutari was for a time the capital of the Servian Empire, and even Jannina was governed for a considerable period before the Turkish conquest by Servian dukes, who were usually of the royal blood. Nor can this occupation have been purely military, for to this day perhaps the

majority of the place-names of Central and Northern Albania are Slavonic. The Serbs, one suspects, must have left a good deal more behind them than the names of villages.

Albanian history may be dismissed in a paragraph. These fierce tribes which rejected the civilisations of Greece, Rome, and Byzantium with an equal impartiality, have achieved political unity only twice. They seem to have succumbed easily to the Turkish conquest. A pasha or two replaced their Greek or Servian governors in the chief towns and virtually nothing was changed outside their walls. But for a brief period under George Castriot, the Scänderbeg (Alexander) of popular legend,<sup>1</sup> they enjoyed a degree of glory and independence unknown before or since. He was the son of a chieftain of Northern Albania whom the Turks took as a boy and brought up as a Janissary. His military talents soon brought promotion, and he learned all that his masters could teach him of the art of war. An act of personal injustice quickened his memory of the Christian faith in which he had first been nurtured. The Turks refused to allow him to succeed to his father's estates, and in his indignation he recovered his patriotism. About the age of forty he escaped from the Turkish camp, renounced Islam, fled to his native mountains, and raised the standard of revolt (1443). He annihilated the first army which was sent against his little mountain fastness of Kroïa, and from that initial success to the day of his death, his ascendancy was gladly recognised at least by the northern branch of the Albanian people. Those who had already accepted Islam returned to Christianity, and for the first time in their history the Albanians were one people under a native king. He lived in perpetual warfare, and defeated every force that was sent against him, including two vast armies led in person by the Sultans Amurath and Mahomed. Nor did he confine himself entirely to guerilla tactics. More than once he gave battle to the Turks on open ground and routed them with

<sup>1</sup> Has tradition in giving this name confused him with Alexander of Macedon?

fabulous slaughter. His prowess was, no doubt, the foundation of his influence over his warlike clans, but to hold together a race with whom feud and faction was already a settled tradition he must have had high gifts of statesmanship.<sup>1</sup> His gallant and successful struggles won him a name far beyond the Balkans. It was doubtless a proof of policy that on returning to Christianity he embraced not the Orthodox but the Catholic faith. That compliment to the West won him the patronage of the Pope, the friendship of Venice, the cautious aid of Ragusa, and some substantial assistance from Naples.

On his death in 1467 he bequeathed his kingdom to his son, John, a minor, and named the Venetian Republic his protector. But the event proved that Albanian independence rested on no force more lasting than the genius of Skänderbeg. The Venetians performed their duties in a perfunctory spirit, though they lent some assistance to the town of Scutari during a long siege. John Castriot fled in 1477 to Naples with many thousands of his subjects, and thereafter the Venetians were content to maintain a few seaports as trading centres. Within ten years after the death of Skänder, nothing remained of his kingdom but an inspiring legend. The memory of this Catholic renegade is held in equal veneration by Moslem, Orthodox and Catholic Albanians; and among the few traditions and ideals which make this strange race a people, despite its own divisions and the oppression of the Turkish yoke, there is none more potent than the history of this brief struggle for independence.

It was not until the time of Ali of Tepelen, Pasha of Jannina, that the Albanians again enjoyed an approach to national independence. Ali was one of the most remarkable characters in all the history of the Peninsula. Born about 1740, a poor country *bey*, left early an orphan, he repaired his fortunes by brigandage, and carved his way to wealth and rank by a combination of violence and treachery.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that two of his most trusted lieutenants did actually revolt against him and accepted commands from the Turks.

Now forging a title to some vacant Pashalik, again waging open war upon neighbouring Pashas, accusing them to the Porte by forged evidence of treasons which he had himself committed, aggrandising himself and his sons by powerful marriages, invariably followed by the ruin of the family which he honoured, he gradually carved out for himself and his heirs a virtually independent principality, which embraced at its zenith not only the greater part of Epirus and Albania, but Thessaly and the Morea as well. He intrigued alternately with England and Napoleon. He employed now English and now French officers to train his troops. He sometimes defied, but more frequently bribed, Constantinople. He was more than once on the verge of espousing the Greek cause, and openly throwing off the Ottoman yoke. He undoubtedly taught the Albanians to despise the Turks, and partly from policy, partly from instinct, encouraged their sense of nationality. To divide them from the Turks he propagated the Bektashi heresy among the Moslems. He recognised no religious divisions. The only one of his generals whom he really trusted was an Orthodox Christian named Athanasi Vaia, while among his most devoted troops were the Catholic Mirdites. His secretaries were all of them Greeks. His rule was one long welter in blood and treachery, but if he depopulated much of the country, his main object seems to have been to suppress brigandage. He tolerated no tyrant but himself within his jurisdiction, and under him commerce flourished and the roads were safe. His massacres of the so-called "Greeks" of Suli are often ascribed to fanaticism. In reality, he merely suppressed the Suliotes as he suppressed all the other predatory tribes and brigand *beys* who defied his administration and troubled the public order. Most of his atrocities were in reality only incidents in his consistent effort to build up a strong and orderly government. To regard this illiterate old savage as a patriot would be absurd; but without intending it, he certainly contributed to the solidarity and the national consciousness of the Albanians. His aim was to carve out for himself and his sons a vast estate that should



survive his death. He cared only for wealth and for power, and while he enjoyed the reality of independence he never dreamed of throwing off the Turkish yoke. In the end he overstepped the tolerance of Constantinople, was proclaimed a rebel, and, after defying the Turks during a two years' siege in Jannina, was murdered with a treachery which was the fittest punishment for the habitual perfidy of his own career (1822). But whatever the historical Ali may have been, he gave the Albanian race a second hero and a legendary leader. His rule must have been rougher and harsher because more efficient than that of the Turks, but it was at least the rule of an Arnaut over Arnauts.<sup>1</sup> To the descendants of the men who groaned beneath it, his cruelty and his courage seem only picturesque. The songs that describe his conquests and his massacres have become a national cyclus. The Christian Gheg Castriot and the Moslem Tosk Ali are more than tribal personalities. They are Albanian heroes, and their exploits are sung in every dialect. Ali may have been a Turkish Pasha, but his end was a great blaze of revolt, and the siege of Jannina has taken rank with Skänder's struggles for liberty. The tradition of Ali's final defiance lived after him, and at least three more or less futile attempts at revolt have been made since his day. The third of these was due to an organisation called the Albanian League, founded in 1880, at first with the connivance of the Turks, who used it against the Montenegrins in order to avoid surrendering the territory assigned to them by the Berlin treaty. But it developed a Nationalist programme, and demanded autonomy. Its head, Prink (princeps?) Doda, the chief of the Catholic Mirdites, a powerful, semi-independent clan of the North, was driven into exile, and since the collapse of this organisation any Albanian who wishes to talk of autonomy finds it safer to seek his audience in Bucharest or Paris.

<sup>1</sup> "Albania" is a word known only to the Western languages, or in the form *'Αρβανίτης* to Greek. The Albanians call themselves Arnauts, or Skipetars.

## § III.—CUSTOMS AND FEUDALISM.

Two-thirds of the Albanians have embraced Islam. Everywhere throughout Turkey they are to be found filling high office in the civil and military services. The present Grand Vizier is an Albanian. The Sultan's palace guard consists of Albanians. At court, in the general staff, and in every *konak* of the provinces they are to be found. At home they are bribed with decorations, or permitted to sate their appetite for power and wealth by holding ranks in the police and the *gendarmerie*. The wealthier *bey*s farm the taxes, and to that extent have an interest in the continuance of corruption. And yet they remain a race apart from the Turks and profoundly hostile to them. There is no community of blood between them, and even in their mosques the barrier between East and West divides them. For the Albanian is essentially a European—a European of the Middle Ages. Alone of all races in Turkey, he has an hereditary aristocracy and a feudal system. Islam, among Eastern peoples, is everywhere a leveller. It obliterates birth and race. A labourer may rise to be a Pasha, and it is no rare sight to see a negro in officer's uniform commanding white troops. But the Albanians have kept their pride of birth. The *Ghegs* are organised in clans, which obey none but their hereditary chiefs. Even among the much more civilised *Tosks* of the South, wealth and rank count for little, and the poorest and youngest *bey* of an old family will claim precedence in public over the most venerable *nouveau riche*. The marriage customs of the Turks make no account of social distinctions. A Turk will marry some Georgian or Circassian slave. The Albanians who became Moslems have remained strict monogamists.<sup>1</sup> They never marry outside their own race and their own rank. A marriage with a wealthy Greek woman or an Albanian girl of new family is held to be a *mésalliance*. The mixing of

<sup>1</sup> The only exception is that a childless wife will sometimes introduce a concubine for the purpose of perpetuating the race. But it is always understood that she herself must choose this second wife.

blood which has resulted in the virtual extinction of the old Turkish stock in Stamboul is utterly unknown in Albania, and the primitive structure of society has remained unmodified by the conquest. In some sort, too, the Albanians have preserved the European attitude towards women. In certain districts the woman receives as the hostess, and even goes unveiled to market. No Albanian will fire at a woman, and even a man who travels with a woman is safe from attack. On the other hand, it must be confessed that the peasant women are little more than beasts of burden. The man's business is with the rifle, the woman does the work, and this doubtless explains why in Albania it is the man who must purchase the wife and not the wife who must find a dowry. But above all, it is in his conception of courage and his sense of adventure that the Albanian differs from the Turk. The Turk of to-day makes a good soldier, but that does not imply that he is really warlike. He is a man who can stand in ranks and obey commands. He will follow his officers with unquestioning obedience, make light of hardship, and fight with superb obstinacy on the defensive. But he has not the Albanian passion for movement and danger. He does not live to win praises for his courage as the Albanian does. He is stupid and unimaginative, and his courage is deficient in dash and aggressiveness. The Albanian, on the other hand, is a born fighter, who cares for no other distinction. It is true that he reverences birth, and has for authority all the respect of patriarchal times. Before the head of a family the younger members seem speechless and will-less, and a man's younger brothers will hardly dare to smoke in his presence unbidden. But far more powerful than this reverence for birth is the respect accorded to courage. Bravery is thought the best title for command, and the young men of a clan or village form themselves into parties, which sustain the rival claims of local heroes. Every spirited boy goes abroad in search of adventure, and one hardly knows whether to compare them to the knight-errants of the Middle Ages or to the head-hunters of the Malay Peninsula. Before he reaches the age of sixteen every lad

is expected, in the more primitive districts, to obtain a complete set of arms by open robbery, and it is held to be more honourable to capture them far afield, beyond the confines of Albania.

In many tribes marriage by capture is still the only recognised institution. The Mirdites, for example, nominal Catholics, still obtain their wives by raiding the neighbouring Moslem clans. The modern Albanian has the same sentiment about his rifle that the mediæval knight had about his sword. It is scarcely decent to go abroad without it. Even in Biglishta, on the confines of settled country inhabited by Slavs, I have seen the Albanians carrying their arms in the market-place and passed them ploughing in the fields with their rifles slung over their shoulders. Life is everywhere cheap in the Balkans, but west of the Pindus it loses even the poor value that belongs to it in Macedonia. Murder is reprobated only where it may lead to an inconvenient vendetta. To kill a stranger is barely an offence against prudence, and certainly no moral code forbids it. In some districts the loss of a kinsman is regarded as lightly as the murder of a stranger, and in one group of villages at least, etiquette forbids lamentation over the death of a fighting-man. His mother or his wife receives the friend who comes to offer her sympathy, with Spartan recitals of the dead man's deeds and with eulogies upon his courage, instead of the conventional wailing which is customary in most regions of the Balkan Peninsula. A life that is so full of accident and of perils faced with defiant joy inevitably breeds a certain stoicism.

There has grown out of this perpetual state of war an institution more curious and characteristic than the anarchy which it tempers—the Albanian code of honour. In the absence of religious restraints or of Governmental interference it is obvious that this perpetual riot of violence must very soon have rendered life intolerable, if indeed it had not ended in the extermination of the Albanians themselves. To check these consequences a system of unwritten custom has grown up among the tribes, which limits and prescribes the right to kill. The Middle Ages

in Europe invented the *Treva Dei*, which forbade murder during four days of the week. The Albanian plan is more usually to observe a close time during the greater part of the hours of daylight. Two clans which are in feud will agree to lay the rifle aside until within an hour or half an hour of sunset. This enables them to get through the ordinary business of the day in peace. The cattle are driven in a little earlier than usual, and the damage which can be done between the end of the close time and the fall of night is thus moderated and restricted to what is thought to be a reasonable limit. Usage invests such truces as this with an extraordinary sanctity. Equally sacred is the right of asylum, and a murderer who takes refuge even with a kinsman of the man he has slain, is safe beneath the roof which has sheltered him. This idea of truce, or the oath which sanctifies it, is known as the *bessa*, a word which gradually comes to cover any relationship of fealty or trust. No idea plays so large a part in the life of an Albanian, and it seems to have developed into something that deserves the name of a sense of honour. And if in general this wild life of brigandage and vendetta has created a state of society of which *homo homini lupus* would be the aptest description, it also leads to ties of friendship which introduce a structure of loyalty into the general chaos. The clan is as homogeneous and devoted as it was in the Highlands of Scotland. Kinship is jealously reckoned and highly valued. An Albanian of good family, for example, will offer a traveller, who is his friend, introductions to a legion of relatives scattered from north to south, few of whom he has ever seen, but all of whom he assumes to be ready to serve him when the occasion offers. There is too an institution of blood-brotherhood, which is also found among some of the Slavs of Macedonia. Friends who have taken the oaths and performed the simple rites of this bond are brothers and allies for life, and are even held to be so closely connected that they must not intermarry in each others' families. These primitive traits belong to a level of social development little higher than that of the Pathans and Afghans.

There is a picturesque side to this life of rapine and bloodshed. If Albania had been better known at the time of the Romantic reaction it would have become a place of pilgrimage and the fountain of much inspiration. It is all neither better nor worse than the wilder parts of Europe in the Middle Ages. The country of the Mirdites, who have preserved not only the feudal system but the Catholic religion, must offer a very fair replica of the condition of the Scottish Highlands, for example, at any period before the Reformation. The system at least breeds men, creatures of superb physique, who lead vivid lives, and mitigate their savagery by a courage and a chivalry which extort an admiration that may easily run into an extreme. They are Nietzsche's over-men, these primitive Albanians—something between kings and tigers. Their present way of life dooms them to a degree of poverty which is a perpetual spur to oppression. Commerce is impossible, and labour is held in small honour, and the inevitable consequence is that sheer hunger drives the northern clans year by year over their borders to prey on their laborious Slavonic neighbours. Some tribes go abroad to work—the Liaps, for example, frequent Constantinople. Others, especially during the past two centuries, have gradually spread themselves over the fertile plains beyond their original mountain haunts, becoming semi-civilised in the process. Scattered Albanian villages are to be found all over the vilayet of Monastir, and some of these settlements date from no more than forty years ago. But neither the annual migrations of labourers nor the permanent settlement of agricultural colonies has done much to modify the habits of the more warlike tribes—*e.g.*, the clansmen of Dibra, who are the scourge of the Bulgarians, much as the Kurds are the harrow of Armenia.

#### § IV.—RELIGION.

The parallel between Kurds and Albanians is indeed so obvious that it has led to a general impression that the Albanians are a race of fanatical savages, who exterminate

and harry their Christian neighbours in obedience to religious hatred. It would hardly be true to say this even of the Kurds. Most of them are very lax Mohamedans, like all the races of Indo-European stock who have embraced Islam, and many are absolutely heretical. But certainly they have become the tools of a movement of fanaticism, and done their utmost to deserve the name of zealots. But the truth about the Albanians is that throughout their history they have resisted every alien culture, Islam among the rest. Two-thirds of them are Moslems, while the Christians are Orthodox in the South and Catholic in the North. But the Mohamedanism of the renegades is as nominal as the Christianity of the faithful remnant. It would be fairer to reproach the Moslems with indifference than with fanaticism. The ease with which they allowed themselves to be converted suggests that their original Christianity must have sat very lightly upon them. It came to them in a Greek dress. Their priests were ignorant and illiterate, and, unlike the Slavs, they had no Church bound up with their sense of nationality. No Saint Cyril had ever come among them to bring them letters and a gospel in their own tongue. The man who exchanged a Greek revelation for an Arabic Koran remained no less an Arnaut and a Skipetar than before, and he probably understood about as much of the new book as of the old. On the whole, that must be the main reason why the Albanians succumbed to Islam so much more readily than the Slavs or the Greeks. They lost neither their nationality nor their civilisation in the process. For certainly they had less excuse and less temptation. A Slav village on the plain often succumbed to overwhelming force when it renounced its Christianity. But an Albanian clan, well armed, and free of its mountain, became Moslem not so much from fear as from the hope of gain. In the North, where Turkish rule is only a name, and even the Christians bear arms, conversion seems a gratuitous act of infidelity. In the South, perhaps, where Turkish authority is more real and where at the present day the possession of arms is rarely permitted even to an Albanian Christian, unfaithfulness is much more ex-  
plicable.

Among the Tosks in recent times villages have often become Mohamedan to avoid being made into *tchifliks* (estates) for Moslem *beys*. Sheer oppression, exercised apparently by the gendarmerie, explained the conversion to Islam some eight years ago of the large village of Godalesh, near Elbasan. But in general the motive of conversion was either the hope of gain or the fear of loss.

The structure of Albanian society doubtless had the result of multiplying one hundredfold the effects of individual conversions among the Albanian chieftains. The advantages of becoming a Mohamedan were so obvious, and the risk of remaining a Christian so great, that throughout European Turkey the upper classes of the native gentry had really no alternative between conversion and flight. A landowner who wished to retain his lands could hardly hesitate. If he became a pervert he might hope to increase his estates at the expense of his faithful neighbours, and perhaps to obtain some official rank as well. If he remained a Christian he had sooner or later to leave the country. The Servian aristocracy, for example, either took refuge in Montenegro or accepted Islam. But the Slav peasants, much less bound to their chiefs than the Albanians, and grouped with more independence in village communities which owned their own lands, were not committed to the fate of the gentry. On pain of accepting a Moslem *bey* and submitting to unnumbered exactions, they were usually able to retain their faith. With the Albanians, on the other hand, the feudal tie was stronger, and if the hope of worldly advantage tempted an aristocrat to become a pervert, the chances were that his people followed his example. He was not merely their landlord. He was their chief, and, however reluctantly, his retainers yielded him obedience.<sup>1</sup> This explanation is, I confess, no more than a guess, but it seems the more plausible if we compare the case of the Vlachs with that of the Slavs and the Albanians. A vast majority of the Slavs remained Christians. The

<sup>1</sup> The best elements of the Albanian people doubtless followed John Castriot when he emigrated to the kingdom of Naples. The Albanians of Sicily still retain the Eastern rite.



majority of the Albanians became Moslem. But it is said that no single case has ever occurred of the conversion of a Vlach village to Islam. Now, the Vlachs form the only race in the Balkans which is absolutely free in its social structure. It has no aristocracy as the Albanians have. And since it is nomadic and pastoral rather than agricultural, it is not at the mercy of landowners, as are so many of the Slavs. Every Vlach community is practically autonomous, and the individual Vlach separates himself without hesitation from his village. When circumstances become too difficult they simply emigrate—as the people of Moschopolis did. The Slavs, once settled round a church and a monastery, remain rooted to the soil. The Albanians follow the fortunes of their chiefs. But the Vlachs are at home wherever there is a mountain-top.

The conversion of the Albanians to Islam has been of enormous consequence politically, but its effects on their habits of thought and even on their social life have been of the slightest. The adoption of the harem system has been partial and perfunctory. They are nearly all heretics, and they pay scant regard to the prohibition of alcohol. They have never forgotten that their ancestors were Christians. Some villages have made a compromise with both worlds. Above ground they have their mosque for all the world to see, while they still keep their candles burning before their *eikons* in a subterranean chapel. Elsewhere it is usual to provide for the uncertain chances of the Last Day by baptizing children as well as circumcising them. Every lad bears a Moslem name, which appears in the official register of the village, while at home he is known as John or George. The Virgin is a name to swear by even in districts which became Moslem very shortly after the Conquest. So little fanaticism is there, that Moslem Albanians will often frequent a Christian church, light a candle to the *eikons*, and, in short, do everything but cross themselves. The women, as is usual in the Balkans, are the conservative force. At Godalesh, for example, they still observe Saints' days, and doubtless they instil into their children an unqualified reverence for the older faith, leaving it to the men to

explain the temporal advantages that spring from conformity to the religion of the Turks. This vacillation is probably commoner in the villages than it is in the towns, but even in Prizrend there is a class which habitually fluctuates between Islam and Christianity.<sup>1</sup> In the same family it often happens that the father is, for official purposes, a Catholic while the sons are Moslems. But if anywhere there is a trace of fanaticism among the Albanians it is in the towns, and especially in those where the local Christians are not Albanians. In Ochrida and Monastir, for example, where there is a Turkish leaven among the Moslem Albanian population, and the Christians are all either Vlachs or Bulgarians, the racial antipathy of Slav and Albanian does, I think, acquire more than a tinge of religious hatred, and a massacre is always a possibility. But in these towns there are Turkish priests at work, whose business it is to educate the Albanians into fanaticism. In the country the priests are few and, for the most part, quite illiterate, and as often as not the mosques are allowed to crumble into decay.

But there is a religious influence at work among the Moslem Albanians more salutary than their natural indifferntism, and more potent than their vague traditions of a Christian past. Islam is never a satisfying creed to a people of European race, and within it there have grown up a variety of sects which expand and refine its teaching and introduce into its harsh and positive doctrine an element of mysticism. In Albania, as in Crete, the most important of these sects is that of the Bektashis. They are a monastic order whose priests are known as dervishes. Unlike the regular Mohamedan clergy, they are often celibates, devoted to a religious life. It is a little difficult to define their relation to orthodox Mohamedanism. They are certainly heretical, but there has been no outward schism. They exist within the Church as a pious brotherhood vowed to charity and good works, which never adopts a formal

<sup>1</sup> Up till 1703 most of the Ghegs were secret Christians who received the sacrament by stealth. In that year a Catholic council forbade this practice.

antagonism to the State religion. But none the less a profound distrust and hostility divides the dervishes from the orthodox Mohamedan clergy, and their order is, or was, prohibited in Constantinople, no doubt because of its Janissary associations. Their influence is, however, much wider than the clerical ranks of their order. Grouped around every monastery with its sheikh (abbot) and its dervishes are thousands of lay brethren, who are initiated in its rites and its doctrines and devoted to its interests. It is not perhaps too much to say that nearly every Albanian—at all events in the South—who has any interest in religion at all, is a member of the Bektashi sect. Its general acceptance seems to date from Ali Pasha, who sought by propagating a heresy among his Moslem subjects to divide them the more effectually from the Turks. It is difficult to avoid the use of the word heresy—and undoubtedly the teaching of the Bektashis is profoundly heretical—but their place in Islam is perhaps most nearly analogous to that of Freemasonry in Christianity at a time when it was a real religious influence—as Tolstoy, for example, describes it in "War and Peace."<sup>1</sup> It imposes on its votaries duties of charity and benevolence, it rallies them round its monasteries, it gives them a more interesting and speculative creed than orthodox Islam, and it links them together by an obligation of mutual helpfulness.

The Bektashi doctrine is a secret discipline which is only fully revealed to the initiated, but I have been able to glean something of its teaching from Bektashis whom I have met in Crete and in Albania.

The sect owes its origin to a certain Hadji (Saint) Bektash, a holy-man who became the chaplain and in a sense the spiritual patron of the Janissaries, and Bektashism was largely propagated through their influence.<sup>2</sup> One can understand that these youths, sprung from European races,

<sup>1</sup> The Bektashis themselves like to imagine that the Freemasons are kindred spirits.

<sup>2</sup> The distinguishing dress of the Janissaries, who were really an order of military monks, was a tall white felt cap. This the Bektashi shiekh (abbots) retain. The little white felt cap which is the ordinary Albanian headdress may owe its origin to this badge.

and snatched from Christian mothers at an age when they must already have learned a little about Christianity, would prefer a liberal and heretical form of Islam. And Bektashism has imbibed elements from all the faiths of the East, while preserving a certain spirit of its own. Its theology is pantheistic. It replaces the Allah of Islam, who stands to his votaries in the relation of an omnipotent tyrant to his slaves, by some conception of a universal spiritual substance into which the human soul may merge and enter. It hates all barriers which divide souls from one another and from God. It finds the way to union with God in a universal love, a general tolerance. It cares nothing for race or creed, and I have heard a Bektashi say that a man might be a Christian and also a member of the order, though in practice he could not tell me of any Christian who had ever made use of the open door; but then the Eastern Christian values tolerance chiefly as a quality useful in Turks. On its mystical side Bektashism teaches that the saint should endeavour even in this life to overcome the barriers of individuality and merge himself in ecstasy with God. In practice I am afraid this is held to excuse a liberal use of opium and alcohol, and the Albanians attempt to realise Hegel's phrase about the God-intoxicated philosopher somewhat too literally. This teaching about a common spiritual substance is somehow reconciled with a belief in the transmigration of souls. The human soul presumably wanders through animal bodies before it attains union with the Divine. Here the suggestion of Buddhist influence seems irresistible. For Bektashism draws the happy inference that no life should be wantonly taken. A really devout Bektashi of the old school wears bells upon his shoes, that he may warn the little creatures of the grass to avoid his footsteps. One might search all the records of Eastern Christianity in vain for a refinement of faith so pleasing and gentle as this. As for its relation to Islam, I believe that Bektashism is not only heretical, but actually rebellious. In secret it denies that Mahomet was a prophet of unique or authoritative rank. I have even been assured by an educated Albanian, who, though not himself a Bektashi, was born

of Bektashi parents, and bred in a devout Bektashi household, that the sect preaches an active contempt for Mahomet. But obviously, if this be so, it is a secret which it would be dangerous for an initiated Bektashi to divulge. Historically Bektashism ranges itself with all the other Moslem heresies, notably with that of the Shiah of Persia and India, who hold the Caliph Ali and his murdered children Hassan and Hussein<sup>1</sup> in especial reverence. Ali they place above Mahomet; I have been told that they believe in a Trinity, of which Ali is a member, but this seems hardly consistent with Pantheism, though the word may have pleased the Janissary lads who had once been Christians.

On the moral side, it has been said that the Bektashis are antinomians who teach that no moral precepts are binding on the elect. I feel convinced that this is a misunderstanding, or perhaps a calumny invented by the Turks. Indeed, the Turks profess to think that they are Atheists. The ethics of the Bektashis is rather a spiritual creed which attempts to supersede an external morality of precepts and commandments by substituting for them some more universal principle of love and charity. It is possible that they sweep aside the Mohamedan version of the Decalogue, just as they disregard the prohibition of wine and of portraiture. As Pantheists they are naturally intolerant of all formalism. Moreover, it is one of their axioms that a man should follow the inward light, indifferent to public opinion. But their teaching on morals was defined to a friend of mine by the sheikh (abbot) of their teké (monastery) near Calcandelen in the following quaint but admirable summary. "All evil," said the sheikh, "consists in the use of these four phrases :—

"'I eat ; you are hungry.'

"'I am good ; you are evil.'"

<sup>1</sup> They believe that the soul of Hussein's murderer has gone into a hare, and for that reason no Albanian will touch or eat hares, though they do not object to shooting them. The sacredness of the hare is a very widespread superstition—found, *e.g.*, in Siberia. Perhaps this legend really rests on some older belief.

And certainly from that text<sup>1</sup> one might construct an excellent system of morality. It would hardly serve as a pillar for the sacred institution of private property, and it would make a swift end of a dogmatic State religion. But for a creed of charity, brotherhood, and tolerance it would make an excellent foundation. I can fancy that Tolstoy and this Bektashi sheikh would find much in common. A teaching so spiritual and so humane is doubtless somewhat above the moral level of the Albanians. But at least it keeps their minds open to better influences, and saves them from becoming like the Kurds—the tools of a fanatical Sultan. Of all its tenets at least they have learned tolerance. It has never been my good fortune to see Bektashism at work under happy political conditions. The Bektashi community in Crete were forced to take sides in the general feud between Christian and Moslem. But they deplored it while they joined in it, as men who approve of better things while constraint hurries them into worse. Amid the angry life of that unhappy island they had contrived to lay the foundations of a quiet and progressive existence. They had their little library of French and Turkish books; they loved in a spirit of broad toleration to debate theology with strangers, with Christians, and among themselves; and their Bektashism seemed to save them from the arid negations of the average "Young Turk," who is too often a freethinker only because his mind is too indolent or too crude to care for speculative things. But to me the type of the good Bektashi is the sheikh of the Teké in Prizrend. Gentle, dignified, and courteous, he spends an innocent old age in a retired garden of red roses and old-fashioned stocks. To visit him was to step into an atmosphere of simplicity and peace. An active life lay behind him. He had spent long years wandering over the Moslem world. He had sojourned in India and studied in Bokhara, listening wherever some noted doctor had a thought to give or an influence to bestow. At the end of his pilgrimage, laden with the wisdom of the East, he even made his way to

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, it is evil to be full when other men are empty. It is evil to boast one's own righteousness and to deny the good in others.

Rome, anxious to prove his tolerance by paying his respects to the Pope. He waited some months for an audience, and came away grieved at the rebuff with which his simple impulse of charity had been met. When his tale was finished he turned to us with an earnest look in his thoughtful eyes, and tried through the unsympathetic medium of our Greek interpreter to convey his kindly mysticism to us. Something we caught about the community of souls, before the time came for us to leave him laden with his roses that seemed to carry with them the rarer fragrance of his gentleness and piety.

#### § V.—KORITZA AND THE LANGUAGE MOVEMENT.

Albania is not all a wilderness. There are plains in its southern confines which have attained a fairly high level of civilisation, where the anarchy is only relative, and the Albanians themselves are ripe for settled government and clamorous for education. The Tosks of the South have always been a milder stock than the northern Ghegs. They are more severely disciplined by the Turkish administration. They pay taxes and submit to military conscription. They indulge with less impunity in raids and forays, in feuds and civil wars. There is no Slav population among them, predestined by its unarmed helplessness to be their serfs and vassals. The alien races who do live among them, notably the Hellenised Vlachs, are a civilising influence. They are within easy reach of the Greek border and Greek culture. The Christian minority belongs to the Orthodox Church, and the Greek language is spoken pretty generally among the upper classes, whether Christian or Moslem, in such towns as Jannina and Koritza, and even by the peasants in the regions near the frontier. Albanian is still the mother-tongue. The *bey*s are still feudal princelings. The primitive Albanian customs are still unmodified. But the world beyond the mountains is a reality and an influence, as it is not when one crosses the Scumbi at Elbasan, where the wild Gheg country begins.

There is an air almost European about the town of

Koritza. The approach to it is along a firm road which is quite convinced that it is not a water-course or an exhausted torrent-bed. Your horse, bred on Turkish highways, at length consents to cross the bridges without a protest, and on some of them you may even remark a parapet. The peasants whom you pass are dressed, it is true, in the garb which their ancestors may have worn when they followed Pyrrhus into Italy, and all of them carry arms; but they postpone their staring until you have passed them, and, insensibly, you feel that you are in a land of free men, where self-respect is almost possible. While the castles of the chiefs in the country of the Ghegs still resemble border-keeps, here, beside the primitive square-built towers of their ancestors, the modern Tosk *beys* have raised enormous *châteaux* which dwarf and overawe the mud hovels of their poor retainers. You note a coal mine, recently worked, in the outskirts of the town, and two mill chimneys—innocent of smoke—quarrel with a tasteless but magnificent new cathedral and a dazzling mosque for the possession of the skyline. The streets are relatively clean, and in the shops of this strange city, remote alike from sea coast and from railway, you meet again all those refinements and superfluities whose very existence you had forgotten in the Macedonian wilderness. The energy and virility of the Albanian character seem somehow to have found a half-expression. Yet a Greek Bishop and a Turkish Pasha, aliens both of them, still claim the allegiance of the town, though confronted by a spirit of the soil which both dread and both persecute—a spirit that is busily knitting a new people together, in spite of all their efforts.

If the secret thought in the august hearts of these two officials could be bared to the world, it would deserve to rank among the rarest curiosities of officialdom. They have one master passion, the Bishop and the Pasha, and when they have finished praying for each other's destruction in their daily secret devotions, I suspect that a fervent little clause in Greek and in Turkish is addressed in much the same phraseology to Allah and the Trinity. And that is a prayer for the destruction of a spelling-book. They look upon that



spelling-book much as Zeus regarded the torches of Prometheus. The end of the Turkish Empire is somehow predestined in the cabalistic symbols of its alphabet, and its little reading lessons in words of one syllable are like to be more fatal to the Greek Church than all the tractates of the heretics. I saw it once, and turned its pages with timid care, as one might handle a torpedo. It was locked in a glass case in the sacred precincts of the American Protestant School of Koritza, where it sheltered safely on foreign soil under the shadow of treaties and capitulations. I had just been paying a formal call on the Bishop, who had explained to me how, ever since he had been Secretary to the Œcumenical Patriarch, his hard-won leisure had been spent in ceaseless efforts to promote a union between the Anglican and the Greek Church. In business hours he had sterner work. He occupied himself in excommunicating the parents of all the children who dared to attend the Protestant school where that spelling-book is harboured. It seemed an odd way of promoting the union of Protestantism and Orthodoxy. As for the Pasha, he had lately sent the chief of police to hunt for seditious books, and only a peremptory telegram from one of the consulates in Monastir had availed to save the alphabet.

The history of that spelling-book is the record of the one hopeful movement which gives a promise of enlightenment to the Albania of the future. There is no trace until the middle of the seventeenth century of any Albanian who was so eccentric as to wish to write his own language. Those old Skipetars, leading their strenuous life of rapine and feud, had no wish to read, and no occasion to write. If the need arose to communicate with a distant friend there was always the professional Turkish letter-writer, who sits cross-legged at his corner in the bazaar in every Oriental town, with his reed and his ink-horn, and he would translate the necessary message into the most involved and courtly Turkish. Failing him, there was the nearest Orthodox village priest, who could usually write in Greek. There were no doubt schools in such centres as Jannina, Berat, Koritza, and Elbasan, but they belonged to the Orthodox Church, and their whole

instruction was in Greek. They taught the young Albanian that he was a Greek, that he must speak Greek, and that his mother-tongue was only a nursery dialect for children, or a barbarous *patois* for "Turks." As for the Moslems, school hardly entered into their notions. The Turkish conception of a school was a place where little boys squatted upon the ground, and recited the Koran by heart. When they had by chance a desire to learn to read and write, even the Moslems preferred, and still prefer, to learn Greek. Greek, after all, is much more spoken than Turkish in Lower Albania; and difficult though its orthography may be, it hardly requires the years of application which are necessary in order to learn Turkish caligraphy. I knew an officer from the Jannina district whose father had actually sent him for a year or two to a Greek Gymnasium. I was even more startled, on distributing some relief-money to the villagers of a few Moslem-Albanian hamlets in the Colonia district, whose homes had been burned by the Bulgarians under Tchakalároff, when with their great horny hands these giants scrawled their signatures on the receipt forms in Greek characters. But, after all, learning which came in a foreign guise could make no progress in Albania. And here the peculiar genius of the modern Greek language is to blame. An Englishman who has had a classical education can understand a leading article in a Greek newspaper after twenty minutes' glance at a paradigm of the modern verb, and yet he would make nothing of the simplest sentence in spoken Greek. To an Albanian peasant who can speak colloquial Greek easily, and scrawl his name without undue labour in Greek letters, the same leading article would convey just nothing at all. But indeed many Albanians who can write Greek are rather able to express certain limited and conventional ideas in Greek than to command the language. I have heard, for example, of a noble Mohamedan family which called in a Greek teacher when the daughter of the family was about to be married. She learned to formulate certain precise and very limited ideas in Greek—mainly information and inquiries about health—not with the intention of acquiring a key to Greek culture, but simply

to send news about domestic events from her new home to the old. The knowledge of Greek letters was at no time rare in Southern Albania, but none the less the Albanians remained illiterate, isolated, and untaught. The few who went to the Greek Gymnasias in Koritza or Jannina, or to the University of Athens became, to all purposes, Greeks. But the bulk of the Albanian people had no intention of denationalising itself, and its patriotism in consequence was quite untainted by letters.

It was not until the second quarter of the seventeenth century that any Albanian developed the odd wish to use his language for literary purposes. The first pioneers seem to have come from among the Catholic clergy. Their record in this matter compares favourably with that of their Orthodox brethren, for whom the terms "Greek" and "Christian" seem to have been synonymous. The first Albanian book that was ever printed was an "Imitatio Christi," published in Venice in 1626. A Catholic Bishop of Uskub, by name Bogdanes, did much for the language. He used the Latin alphabet, and a few copies of his works are still extant. He had a more enterprising successor towards the end of the eighteenth century, an Orthodox teacher named Theodore, who lived in Elbasan. He was the first pioneer to attempt a serious study of the language, and his "Lexicon Tetraglosson" (Latin, Greek, Vlach, Albanian) displays a real originality, since it claims for Albanian a place among the languages of Europe. He employed a curious alphabet of his own, which is neither Latin nor Greek.<sup>1</sup> Some patriots suppose that it was an ancient Albanian alphabet which never fell out of use at Elbasan. Others suggest that it may have been founded on a secret cipher which some merchants of Elbasan used for their private correspondence. More probably it was revived and, perhaps, modified by Theodore. The old men of this district employ it to this day.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to crush the

<sup>1</sup> It appears to differ but slightly from the first Dorian alphabet based upon the Phœnician characters, and, indeed, Von Hahn believes that it was derived directly from the Phœnicians.

<sup>2</sup> I take these details, and, indeed, much else in this chapter, from a manuscript entitled "*περί Ἀλβανῶν*," which I found one evening

• unpruned wealth of sound in which Albanian riots, into less than thirty-one or thirty-two characters. Certainly no  
• ingenuity has ever succeeded in representing it in Greek. The ambition of Theodore's life was to found an Albanian press in Elbasan. He worked and schemed and saved, and at length was able to give an order to the Vlach printers of Moschopolis for a supply of Albanian types. The order was duly executed, and Theodore, full no doubt of a happy excitement as his patriotic dream approached its realisation, must needs go in person to Moschopolis to escort his precious goods to Elbasan. His concern for their safety excited the suspicions of the carriers. What could there be in these heavy boxes so dear to Theodore's heart, unless it were money? And accordingly, taking counsel among themselves, the muleteers murdered Theodore. Tradition does not relate what they did with their mysterious and useless spoil. Clearly Theodore was a pioneer born out of due time. It was a dangerous thing in those days to play with letters in Albania. Some fifty years later another Southern Albanian, Naoum Vekilcharyi, took up Theodore's task, and worked out  
• another alphabet. It made some progress in the districts round Koritza, and a few little booklets were printed in it. But by this time the jealousies of the Greek clergy were aroused, and it is generally believed among Albanian patriots that Naoum, who was so reckless as to entrust himself during an illness to the Greek hospital at  
• Constantinople, was poisoned by order of the Patriarch. I repeat the story not because I believe it, but because it is interesting to note that the efforts of the Albanians to throw off the ignorance of the centuries had already roused the hostility of the Orthodox Church. As yet the movement was in its infancy, and could be checked by the untimely deaths of its leaders. Meanwhile the Catholic clergy in the

hidden behind an ottoman in my bedroom in Monastir. It was written by a patriotic Albanian Christian, an educated man with some literary talent, whose name I must for his own sake suppress. His object in hiding it in my room was to make the case of his countrymen known  
• in England, and perhaps I serve his purpose best by incorporating his material with my own observations.

North were by no means idle. The Jesuits issued a number of books, mostly, however, legends of the Saints, which can have had no particular educative value. A religious periodical was also published by them in Scutari. The happiest event for the Albanian language was the translation of the Bible by Constantine Christophorides (whose intellect had been quickened by an intimate association with the scholarly traveller, Von Hahn), under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was issued at first in two alphabets, more or less modified to suit the peculiar phonetics of the Albanian language—in Greek characters for the South, in Latin for the North. These early editions, however, found small favour, but between the years 1877-9 a Committee of Albanian patriots, most of them Moslems, sat in Constantinople and elaborated yet another alphabet, mainly Latin, with an admixture of Greek characters. This was at length adopted by the Bible Society, and their Albanian colporteurs were set to work to sell it. They are to this day persecuted alike by the Greek Church and by the Turks. Every journey they undertake is an adventure. Their families are boycotted and excommunicated by the Orthodox priesthood; they themselves are frequently imprisoned by the Turks. The work of the Constantinople Commission soon attracted the notice of the Turkish Government, and it had perforce to remove itself to a free centre. It settled in Bucharest and established a printing press of its own, from which about fifty books have been issued, including a Grammar, a Life of Skänderbeg, a popular history of Albania, and a number of translations. Albanian periodicals are issued in Bucharest, in Sofia, in Rome, and in London,<sup>1</sup> but comparatively few copies find their way into Turkey. There is a chair of Albanian in Vienna University, and the Austrian Consulate in Monastir from time to time recruits students among the more promising of the younger patriots. They are lured away by a promise of employment and education, and their fate is, of course, to become the

<sup>1</sup> *Albania*, published in London, is a literary monthly edited by Faik Bey Koñitza, a savant and scholar, whose high attainments in philology are as remarkable as his tolerance and enlightenment in politics.

agents of Austrian intrigue. The Austrian Foreign Office has something more practical in view than the study of an obscure and neglected branch of Aryan philology.

To keep Albania savage and ignorant is a fundamental principle of Abdul Hamid's statescraft. Macedonia is covered with schools which disseminate the views of every conceivable racial propaganda. There are Greek schools to Hellenise Vlachs and Slavs and Albanians. There are Bulgarian schools which maintain the schism within the Orthodox Church. There are Servian schools to split the Slav element. There are Roumanian schools to detach the Vlachs from the Hellenic interest. On all of these the Porte smiles with an indifferent and capricious favour. The more schools there are and the more propagandas, the less fear is there of a coalition among the Christians against the Turkish yoke. For all of these there is a contemptuous tolerance. They are part of the hereditary Ottoman tradition of dividing to conquer. But Albanian schools fall under a very different category. In them the Turks have seen a force making not for discord, but for unity. The Albanians, divided in religion, have only their language in common, and in the cult of that language lies the hope of the reunion of Moslem and Christian. The Albanian movement, nationalist like all the others, differed from them in seeking its rallying-point not in a religious but in a secular propaganda. Though the earlier pioneers were all Christians, their work was never partisan, and they readily won the patronage and the sympathy of the Moslem aristocracy. It is a matter of indifference to the Turks under what national or religious banner the Christians may enrol themselves. But that Moslems and Christians should unite, that Moslems should discover a racial consciousness, was quite intolerable, and at once marked out the Albanian movement for persecution. Turkish political theory does not recognise race as a legitimate line of distinction among peoples. It is religion which divides. A good Moslem has no business with history or language or aspirations. He is an Ottoman and a subject of the Caliph-Sultan. Christians, within certain limits, may indulge in what political sym-

pathies they please. They may even hang portraits of a Greek or a Servian King in their *cafés* if they choose. They do not bear arms, they are ineligible for any real executive office in the State, they are nullities who may safely be allowed to play at sentimental disloyalty, provided it stop short of secret association or armed demonstration. But when Moslems take to these vagaries it is a very different matter. It is upon their arms that the Empire rests. Their loyalty is necessary, and anything less than loyalty is not merely treason, but schism. That is doubtless why the "Young Turkish" Liberal movement, ineffective and innocuous though it is, is persecuted more severely than any Bulgarian conspiracy. In the case of the Albanians there were additional reasons at work. They are a military people whose revolt would be as formidable as their loyalty is valuable. Their country is difficult and inaccessible, and therefore it seemed wise to check the first signs of particularism, since an armed rising would be peculiarly difficult to subdue. Further, it is from the Albanians that the Sultan recruits his bodyguard, and what would become of Yildiz if its sentries were to develop national aspirations? Finally, if the Albanians were to become milder and more civilised under the influence of letters, who would keep the Serbs and the Bulgarians in check? They would cease to be the marauders and the tyrants of the marches, and the Slavs of these border regions might some day raise their heads. These were cogent reasons why the Albanian movement should be ruthlessly suppressed.

All experience in the East goes to show that when a people begins to cultivate its language and to claim schools of its own, its next wish is an eccentric and uncomfortable demand for decent government. Indeed, the surprising thing is that Albanian schools ever came to be established at all. In 1884, however, the Albanian Society, which was busied in publishing its booklets and periodicals in Bucharest, contrived to open a secondary school for boys in Koritza. It had on an average about sixty pupils, who came from both Moslem and Christian families, while the teachers belonged to the Orthodox rite. Its success

among the Christians, however, was limited, because from the first it was subjected to the systematic persecution of the Greek clergy. The reading of anathemas against it soon became a regular part of the ritual in the Greek cathedral. Its teachers were steadily boycotted. But even these methods proved ineffective, and ultimately the Greeks found it necessary to denounce the two principal Albanian teachers as traitors who were conspiring against the Sultan. Their efforts went unheeded for some years, since the war of 1897 had left the whole Greek race under a cloud. But in 1902 the teachers, two brothers named Naoum and Leonidas Natcha, were arrested, and still languish untried in prison. The school, as I saw it, is a wrecked and dismantled shell, its garden overgrown with weeds, and its class-rooms littered with the stones which the apostles of Hellenism and culture cast through its broken windows as they go arrogantly by. Another interesting experiment still survives in a maimed form. In 1889 an Albanian Protestant School for girls and young boys was started under the auspices of the American Mission by Mr. Gerasimo Kyrias, an able and devoted man who did much in a short life for his language and the cause. Like so many of the pioneers of the movement, he came to an untimely end. He was captured by brigands, and dragged about by them for the best part of a year, while his friends collected an exorbitant ransom. The exposure, the privation, and the wanton cruelty to which he was subjected during this experience practically killed him, and he died soon after his release. The school is carried on by his sister, a graduate of Robert College. For four years it thrived and was much patronised by the Moslem gentry of Koritza. But its success in due course aroused the suspicions of the authorities. It would never do to allow the next generation of the Mohamedan aristocracy to be brought up by mothers who had imbibed the idea of patriotism with a knowledge of their own tongue. It was given out that the father of any Mohamedan child attending the school would be sent immediately, and without trial, into lifelong exile. Too many had gone that road before—now a



hapless poet whose whole crime was to have published a version of the legend of Genevieve in the proscribed Albanian language, and again a generous and tolerant *bey* who had assisted the Koritza schools. The threat proved effective, and only the Christian scholars remained. With them the Greek clergy knew how to deal. There were the usual anathemas, excommunications, and boycotts, and in 1904 when I visited Koritza, Miss Kyrias found her pupils reduced to about twenty boarders, some of them Protestants, and most of them members of families whose homes lie beyond the immediate influence of the Bishop of Koritza. Her teaching is carried on as though it were a furtive and shameful practice, and her school, centre of high influences, model of order and sweetness and goodwill, would be more readily tolerated if it were a nest of vice and crime. At any moment the chief of police may come clanking into the courtyard, and more than once the brave woman who works there alone and unprotected has stood in her doorway and dared him to execute his threat of confiscating her books. The school itself is under a foreign flag, but Miss Kyrias is a Turkish subject, and liable to the same treatment that was meted out to the masters of the boys' school. There are also the Catholic schools in the North, conducted by the Jesuits in Scutari, and one or two other of the larger Gheg centres. The Catholic clergy has done much for the Albanian language, but it conducts its schools on a definitely religious basis, which deprives them of any influence upon the Mohamedans, who form, after all, two-thirds of the population. They owe their immunity to the fact that they are under Austrian protection.<sup>1</sup> Unhappily their civilising mission is confined to the towns. If ever the Ghegs are to be reclaimed from savagery it will be through neutral or secular schools which the sons of the Moslem *beys* can attend. The same organisation which founded the Albanian boys' school in Koritza, opened

<sup>1</sup> The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul were formerly established in Prizrend, but since they are under French protection the Austrian interest intrigued against them, and they were compelled to abandon their work.

schools at Pogradetz and in the Colonia district, but these also were closed mainly through the jealousy of the Greeks. On the coast there are secular Italian schools at Durazzo and Vallona, which have also had their share of persecution. Their aim is to propagate Italian influence and their success is limited.

The fears of the Turks and the jealousies of the Greeks have worked their will upon the Albanian movement so far as any external organisation goes. They have destroyed the machinery of propaganda, and left it a cult of the heart which depends on the devotion of individuals. It has neither schools nor churches nor committees. There are Albanian societies no doubt in Roumania, in Italy, and Egypt, more or less active and more or less independent. But they have no branches in Albania. Nothing would be easier than to found a secret society on the lines of the Bulgarian Committee, but in fact nothing of the sort exists. There is not even a rudimentary organisation to carry on the smuggling of nationalist literature, and venal and inefficient though the Turkish customs and police may be, they are a barrier which suffices to exclude the periodicals that preach revolt. It is in one sense a singular proof of political incapacity that with such ample opportunities so little has been done. Perhaps it also is due to the fact that in most respects the bulk of the Albanian race has already the freedom which it values. The Albanians enjoy anarchy and they have not the same motives as the Bulgarians to combine for the achievement of political autonomy. For already they have liberty to do anything but learn. And yet, despite the want of organisation, a bloodless and innocent propaganda goes forward below the surface, which is in surprising contrast to the martial spirit of the race and to the traditions of the Balkans. It works neither by open warfare nor secret assassination, but the cause has none the less its unpaid and unofficial missionaries, who create wherever they go a spirit of brotherhood, which is in its own way more valuable than any disciplined and tyrannical society. Beyond the reach of the Turkish authorities, in Corfu, in Cairo, in Bucharest, and even in Sofia, wherever

Albanians migrate in search of labour and wealth, they find some countryman possessed of education and enlightenment, who urges upon them the cult of their own language, awakens their pride in their own nationality, and teaches them to look for a future of progress and independence. Returning to their own mountains, they bring with them the mysterious lore of the new alphabet. The Albanian who despised letters when they came to him in a foreign guise, conceives a new attitude towards learning when he discovers that his mother-tongue can be written and printed. Civilisation is no longer the alien thing which demanded of him some sacrifice of his nationality, some disloyalty to his past. He becomes an enthusiastic worshipper of this Minerva in *fustanella*, and his smuggled spelling-book opens out to him a vista of culture and advancement. Even the Turkish prisons have become centres of enlightenment, and schoolmasters incarcerated for the offence of teaching boys find themselves enabled to influence men. I count among my friends an Albanian *bey* who, condemned for murder, entered the gaol of Salonica a savage of the old school, dreaming of no life but the turbulent round of vendettas and oppressions which his ancestors had led before him. He learned in his captivity to read and write Albanian, and to-day, if he is still uneducated and naïve, his whole attitude has undergone a fresh orientation. He is regarded by the Christians of his district as a champion and a protector. If he is still suspected and disliked by the Turks, it is for his charity, his tolerance, and his friendship with the disaffected. He cares no more for the old tribal feuds and dreams instead of a war of liberation. And such cases are by no means uncommon. I cannot do better than quote the quaint words of my manuscript, the work of an Albanian who is himself engaged in the midst of his other avocations in this informal and romantic propaganda. "The only means which the Albanians possess for spreading the national idea is some well-thumbed spelling-book, which works many a miracle as it passes from hand to hand, hunted though it is by the Turks and the Greek clergy, who both anathematise it as a seditious and subversive

book. The spelling-book carries with it a magic that dissolves feuds, and unites by indefinable bonds the most ancient adversaries, brings peace and the warmest friendship among all ranks and ages, awakens an indescribable enthusiasm for the language and the race, and for every good work, and in short transforms the savage and inhuman clansman into a civilised citizen." Again, after describing the deplorable feuds and jealousies which are caused among Albanians of good family by the everlasting struggle for precedence, the manuscript goes on to say :—

"But among Albanians who have been enlightened by learning to write their own language, nobility of birth has no longer a meaning, for all of them are equal, sincere friends and, so to speak, blood brothers. Forgotten are offences and feuds, rank and caste, and whatever might tend to separate. You may see in Albania to-day that men are ranged and ranked and valued not according to their creed, their age, or their birth, but according to the depth of their patriotic feeling. To Albanian patriots, creeds and ranks are senseless and obsolete inventions; in their view the highest nobility and the best religion is to love and write and cultivate their tongue and their nationality." Nor is this quaint and enthusiastic language exaggerated. I have seen an official in the Turkish hierarchy, a Moslem Albanian of good family, publicly embracing a Christian peasant, and the tie between them was simply the prohibited cult of their common language. Under the joint persecution of the Church and the State, the cult of the Albanian language has deepened and broadened into a patriotic movement at once nationalist and democratic. Because the Moslems are more in earnest about it than the Christians, it has swept aside the barriers of creed; and because the Christians who did the work of pioneers are men of the people, it has broken down the prejudices of caste. To the indifferent foreigner it may seem a trivial matter that an unlettered race should discover their own language after centuries of neglect. It has no literature save the ballads of the brigands and the threnodies of the old women who carry on the ancient trade of professional

mourners. It has nothing to add to the music or the wisdom of European speech. And yet the cult of it has, for the first time in their history, united a divided and barbarous people. Persecution has strengthened their fibre, and the spiritual stimulus of this preoccupation about an idea has enlarged their mental horizon, softened their manners, and raised them to a moral level where self-discipline and disinterested devotion alike become possible. In this cult of letters and language lies the best pledge for the future of Albania. Thanks to the folly of Greeks and Turks, it is already laying the foundation of her independence, and, at the same time, of her civilisation. When, in the fulness of time, an Albanian prince takes his seat on the throne of Skänderbeg, he will swear his fealty to the enlightened constitution of the youngest of European kingdoms neither on Bible nor Koran. He will take his oath, if he be wise, on the Albapian spelling-book.

#### § VI.—PRIZREND AND THE REFORMS.

If Koritza is the capital of Lower Albania and of the milder Tosks, with their quasi-Hellenic civilisation and their new and bloodless cult of letters, Prizrend is a centre of the wilder Gheg race; and when I visited it in June, 1903, it was all agog with the Albanian revolt against the imposition of the Austro-Russian reforms. A strategic railway, which seems to carry no freight but cannon, no passengers save soldiers or prisoners of war, leads through a narrow glen from Uskub to the little village *dépôt* of Ferizovitch—a place which won some celebrity a year or two ago by rising in revolt against its Turkish Mudir (sub-prefect), and driving him forth minus his ears. At Ferizovitch Albania begins. The outward sign that its frontier has been passed is to be seen in the tobacco-shops. The little booths stand open to the street, and lithe men in white caps—the true Albanian rarely wears a fez—sit cross-legged behind great heaps of contraband tobacco. They sell it openly, without disguise. There once were branches of the Turkish tobacco monopoly in Albania, but it proved



SERBIAN PEASANTS AT FERIZOVITCH



MOSLEM TYPES. USKUB MARKET-PLACE



so easy to murder their managers, and so difficult to check the trade in "free" tobacco, that they have long ceased to exist. Those fragrant heaps of native leaves are the scutcheon of Albanian anarchy, the symbol of the failure of the Turks to make, even in externals, the faintest impression upon this race of mountaineers. Between three and four years ago, in consequence of a murderous but fortunately unsuccessful attack on the Austrian consul in Prizrend, a few beginnings of ordered government were made in that town. The blood of the consuls is always the seed of civilisation in Turkey. In Ipek and in Djacova there is still literally no law and no court of justice. The civil code, more or less on the Napoleonic model, which Turkey possesses, is not in force in these towns. Such justice as is administered is dealt out by religious functionaries whose code is the Koran. In all that belongs to the civil side of politics, we are still in the heyday of Islam. The kadi administers the law as it was laid down by the Prophet, and his court observes the same maxims and the same ceremonies which prevailed when the Barmecides were Caliphs in Bagdad. It is still the world of the "Arabian Nights," and here in Europe, within a day's journey of the railway that leads to Vienna, we are in the East and the Middle Ages. Elsewhere in Albania—at Scutari, for example—even the law of the Koran is unrecognised. The only canon of justice is the antique code of the Albanian clans, which must be pretty much what it was when Achilles led his myrmidons to Troy. It deals chiefly with murder and its punishment, explains in what circumstances a man's house must be burned to the ground, when the son must die for the sins of the father, and under what conditions a man must take to the hills and devote himself in pursuit of vengeance to a life of outlawry. The Turks, despairing of replacing this code by anything of their own, gave up the struggle, and actually printed a translation of a crude version of it in the official calendar of the Vilayet of Scutari, thus adopting it as the law of the land. The historian in search of ironies and anomalies could find no stranger contrast than this of Turks and Albanians—the



one, an Asiatic race of Mongol blood and the most meagre intellectual endowment, yet possessed, thanks to Arabian influence, of a fairly humane and elaborate code of laws ; the other, a European people of Aryan stock, boasting in part a certain nominal Christianity, gifted, quick, and intelligent, and in contact through the ages with Greek and Italian civilisations, yet content in the twentieth century with a set of institutions which have remained unaltered since the first days of the Aryan migration. A show, however, was being made of changing all this when we were in Prizrend. Two new judges had been sent to Scutari, a Jew and a Greek. Both had been duly murdered. Two more had arrived in Prizrend, a Servian renegade and a Jew, and they were awaiting events. Turkish officials in Albania pass their lives in awaiting events. They bring little furniture with them, and feel their way cautiously before they unpack more than the bare necessities of life. The Albanians have a short way of demanding the removal of obnoxious officials. They simply make an appearance *en masse*, rifle in hand, round the official residence, and in a few hours' time a cavalcade is courteously escorting its late Governor towards the dull plains where tame men purchase their ready-made cigarettes from the licensed shops of the Turkish Régie.

Some years ago an unusually enterprising Turkish official compiled a work which describes itself as the Year-book of the Vilayet of Kossovo. It contains statistics of population, and taxation returns for every town and district of the province. It has long since grown obsolete, for as the years roll by, only the date on the cover is altered. There is one item, however, which has never grown antiquated. It relates to the districts of Djacova and Ipek, of which it is truthfully stated on a blank page that "no reliable statistics have yet been published." The plain fact is that Djacova and Ipek pay no taxes, and furnish no recruits to the Turkish army. It seemed for a moment as though all this would be changed, and in 1903 there were smooth official prophets who supposed that after a sharp revolt

Albania had been cowed and reformed. It was a time of turmoil. Even the railway was forbidden to Europeans, and it was by a ruse, over which it is prudent to throw a veil of obscurity, that I contrived, during a brief absence of Hilmi Pasha from Uskub, to penetrate to Prizrend. Natives shook their heads, and spoke of the journey as an impossible adventure. It was twelve months since a European had been there, and he had gone in the train of two consuls, with a squadron of cavalry to guard him.

I left Uskub with high expectations. What might one not discover in that mysterious region, as strange as Arabia, as distant as the Soudan? I was not disappointed. I witnessed two miracles. I saw Albania tranquil, and discovered an official Turkish version of passing events which was substantially true. For the moment Prizrend was like any other town in Turkish Europe. It was outwardly stolid and calm. The Albanians, who up till two months before had never crossed the road without slinging their rifles on their shoulders, were going about unarmed. In the town nothing reminded you that you were in a country where no stranger dare walk alone—unless, indeed, you happened to look behind as you passed down some narrow secret street and detected an Albanian in the act of solemnly spitting on the ground to express his indignation at your presence. There had really been “a sort of war” in Albania. A battle did really take place near Djacova. The Albanians were really more or less cowed, and for the moment they had accepted the “reforms.”

Three months before, when we in Europe suddenly realised that there was an Albanian question, because an unfortunate Russian consul had been murdered in Mitrovitza, there were something like two thousand Albanians in arms round the town, and the inconsiderable Turkish garrison was wondering upon which side it would be more prudent to fight. And then week by week the faithful ragged regiments from Asia Minor began to arrive. By May there were thirty battalions ready to move. It was no trivial operation. The Sultan did not risk his troops in

small detachments. And when thirty battalions came to Prizrend there remained nothing for the clansmen to do. They returned prudently to their villages, and left their rifles at home. It was doubtless humiliating; for your Albanian regards his rifle as our forefathers regarded their swords; it is the badge of nobility, if not of manhood, and, moreover, in this climate it is rather more necessary than clothing. But, after all, in Prizrend there was no particular need to resist. The thirty battalions interfered with nobody, and nobody interfered with them. It is true that twenty men were arrested, but as only three of them were persons of importance the incident could hardly be represented as a *casus belli*. The thirty battalions rested in dignity, and presently they moved on to Djacova.

Djacova despises Prizrend. In Prizrend there are two European families, while the soil of Djacova is still clean. And accordingly Djacova decided to indulge in passive resistance. For five whole days the market was closed, which is in the East the deadliest act of defiance. The thirty battalions and their three Pashas sat chafing while the telegraph worked. The three Pashas were not unanimous—why else should they be there? In Turkish armies there are always three Pashas—one to propose, one to oppose, and one to telegraph to Constantinople. Day after day the thirty battalions lay idle. Day after day the shops were closed. And Constantinople cautioned diplomacy. There must be no violence, no inconsiderate urgency, for Albanians are not infidels. But at last the order came which permitted the three Pashas and the thirty battalions to require the Albanians of Djacova in the Sultan's name to open their shops. On the sixth day the shops were duly opened, and in the Sultan's name they displayed once more to the eye of day and His Majesty's troops the excellent contraband tobacco for which the district is so justly famous. It was the beginning of the end. The Albanians in the hills treated the enforced opening of the shops as a declaration of war, and proceeded to take a cavalry patrol in an ambushade. Something like thirty troopers were killed, and then at length the Turks acted in earnest. For one

day there was fighting. The Albanians held positions in the hills, and the Turks assailed them with artillery. At the end of the day the Albanians still held their rocks, and each side had lost somewhere between eighty and one hundred men. Then came further days of inaction, during which the Turks contented themselves with destroying about ninety mediæval towers or *koulés*. These *koulés* play some considerable part in the feudal organisation of Albania. Only a rich chief can build a *koulé*. Since he is rich he must have been unscrupulous, and since he is bold he becomes a leader. To destroy his tower is in some sense to sap his influence. Meantime, however, Turkish reinforcements were moving up from Ipek, and the Albanians ran the risk of being taken in flank. They were without commissariat or organisation, and their food and ammunition were all but exhausted. Day by day they dwindled away, and when at length the thirty battalions advanced, the hills were deserted. For that year there was no more fighting. At Mitrovitza, where some nine hundred tribesmen had attempted to rush the bridge against Turkish cannon, and again at Djacova the Albanians felt they had done enough for honour. They knew the Turks too well to take their threats of a permanent occupation and a regular administration in earnest. But in any event they lacked the organisation for a prolonged campaign. At the summons of their chiefs each man had marched to the *rendezvous* carrying as many cartridges as he could wear upon his person. When these had been exhausted there was nothing more to be done. The Albanians seem incapable of the long years of preparation which precede a Bulgarian revolt. They collect no war chest, and they amass no magazines of ammunition. Their risings accordingly are alarming but brief adventures, and if the Turks can survive until each man has shot away his beltful of cartridges, they may enjoy their triumph—until the following spring.

And so for a season the comedy of reforms went on. Under the personal supervision of Hilmi Pasha the blank pages in the calendar of the Vilayet of Kossovo were

gradually filled in, and beautiful lists were prepared showing how much these wild districts ought to pay in cattle-taxes, and how many conscripts they should furnish to be the despair of Turkish officers.<sup>1</sup> The budget of the Vilayet showed how the blessings of civilisation had already been squandered with a lavish hand on these wild regions. Half-way on the road to Prizrend we met a Greek engineer. He was a civilised man who had studied in Vienna, and he gladly stopped to talk with us and tell his tale. He had been for six months in the Turkish service. He had been sent to Scutari to inspect the roads—a grim Turkish joke. It seems he was actually sent on a voyage of discovery to look for bridges, but although he was surrounded by a powerful Turkish escort, the Albanians forbade him to go on. Four months later he was transferred to Prizrend. He was told that in a week the road from Prizrend to the railway at Ferizovitch would be repaired, and he proceeded to inspect it. Ten per cent. of the Macedonian revenues, so Hilmi Pasha had told me, had been set apart for the repair of the roads. Something had indeed been done. Two months before our visit the road was a species of torrent-bed which wandered among rocks and rivulets. After a careful inspection we were able to discover, over a space of several miles, murderous pegs driven into the centre of it at intervals of three hundred paces. These were the reforms. The hand of man had undoubtedly made its mark on the torrent-bed, and when oxen tripped over the pegs and wheels broke against them the natives thanked Europe for the boon. But as for the Greek engineer, he had seen enough. He was tired of waiting for next week. The money and the labour to repair the road were not forthcoming, and he was on his way to Uskub to tender his resignation. He seemed to me

<sup>1</sup> The name by which the Albanians describe their Turkish officers is quite unprintable; suffice it to say that it breathes a withering contempt. The result is that an Albanian regiment in time of war or revolution does precisely as it pleases. I have heard a European witness describe how the Albanian conscripts employed in Adrianople during the late rebellion instead of marching, rode about in commandeered landaus.

typical of all that the Turks had done in these Albanian regions to realise the reforms. They boasted that they had purged the gendarmerie of its worst characters. Its ranks were, in fact, recruited from among the more enterprising robbers of the country. A few of the more notorious had been dismissed. Already they had begun to return. In the course of a single stroll through Prizrend two gendarmes were pointed out to me, both of them notable murderers, who had been cashiered and then reinstated. For the rest, a very few Christians have been enrolled in the ranks. I am bound in fairness to say that some precautions had been taken to ensure their safety. They spent their day shut up in the police-office, lest the Albanians should see them ; and when they returned to their homes at night, they were not allowed to take their rifles with them, as their Moslem comrades did. It was thought that the Albanians might feel less insulted if these Giaour policemen went about harmless and unarmed. That an infidel should carry a rifle and arrest one of the faithful would have been intolerable. And if, after all, the Albanians should fall upon the defenceless gendarmes as they returned to their homes, there would be a minimum of bloodshed. From a certain standpoint this refusal to arm the new recruits must be viewed as a humanitarian measure.

Returning through Uskub, nearly a year later, I learned (April, 1904) something of the sequel to this curious chapter of history. The first attempt to enforce taxation and conscription at the expense of the Ghegs of Djacova and the North had led once more to a rising, this time more extensive and more dangerous. Dibra also was up in arms, and had not the Turks displayed notable strategy in preventing the union of the contingents from that region with the rebels of Liuma and Djacova, they might have had to face a somewhat serious rebellion. As it was, a very considerable Turkish force under Shakir Pasha was surrounded near Djacova, and would have had no resource but capitulation had not Shemsi Pasha marched from Uskub at the head of a formidable army. The negotiations which followed ended in a substantial success for the Albanians.

The Turks did not quite consent to renounce their rights to raise taxes and enrol conscripts in Upper Albania, but they did agree to postpone these obnoxious operations for two years—a term which is likely enough to prove an equivalent to the Greek Kalends. The Turks, of course, are compelled in deference to Austria and Russia, to continue to make a show of introducing reforms, and from time to time some Christian Servian gendarmes are enrolled. But it is tolerably certain that if these attempts should seem too serious or too persistent, the Albanians will rise once more.

It is a little difficult to explain the motives which have brought about these Albanian risings. When a Bulgarian takes a rifle in his hand, appeals to the sympathy of Europe, invokes the sanctity of the Berlin Treaty, and says that he wants liberty and autonomy, reforms and a constitution, we think that we know what he means. He uses the catchwords of Western Europe, and his attitude towards ourselves is deferential. But the Albanians have defied Europe. They began their campaign by murdering M. Sterbina, the Russian Consul at Mitrovitza. And their object seems to be to protest against reform. Certainly, if we look no further than the surface, their movement is not deserving of much sympathy. It seems to be confessedly reactionary, and Europe has some excuse if she supposes that they are more fanatical than the Turks themselves. Their leaders, too, are men of the old school, chiefs whom the average Christian of the Balkans describes without hesitation as "brigands." It is true that some of them have risen to consideration through rapine. A brigand or a successful "rural guard" will often retire on the proceeds of his robberies, build himself a mediæval keep, and terrorise the neighbourhood. His district becomes an Alsatia, a refuge for every desperate outlaw, and he concludes no treaties of extradition. The Turks make it their policy to humour him. The highwayman of yesterday is decorated to-day, and the path is open to uniforms and offices. He becomes a kingmaker in his little territory. At his complaint the prefect (*Kaimakam*) is dismissed, and if he makes common cause with a few of his fellow "chiefs" he may

even hope to unseat a Vali. He is free to rob, free to murder, free to grow rich. No Christian dare complain against him, for the local officials are his creatures. If he has a behest to make, he need only send the bellman round the town to shout it to the people. When it was rumoured that a Russian consul was coming to Mitrovitza the chief Isa Bolétinaz sent his henchman publicly drumming through the streets with the cry, "I, Isa Bolétinaz, forbid any man of Mitrovitza to let his house to the Russian Consul, and if he does, it will be the worse for him." But the better class of these men are hereditary chieftains of old families, who have won their martial reputation, not in brigandage, but by prowess in local feuds. Isa Bolétinaz, for example, spent six years "in the mountains" avenging the murder of a relative. In the course of a campaign of this sort an Albanian may play the brigand, in the sense, that he lives upon the country; but his object is not so much plunder as revenge. The distinction may seem a subtle one. Certainly the men behind this movement—Suleiman Batúsha and Isa Bolétinaz, for example—are the representatives of the old anarchical tradition. To some of them anarchy is a vested interest, to others it represents a sentiment of independence.

At bottom the Albanian movement is, like all Balkan movements, inspired by a nationalist ideal, and by a wish to obtain emancipation from Turkish rule, and if it wears an appearance of hostility to Europe that is only because Europe ignored Albania in the Berlin Treaty, and because she has made herself in practice the protectress of the Slavs, with whom the Albanians have a traditional feud. I have often tried, in conversation with Albanians, to obtain some clue to their attitude. The Ghegs have, as a rule, too little education to explain with any clearness what it really is they mean and want. The rising was an instinctive outburst. But if one can imagine a Gheg primitive enough to share the views of Bolétinaz and his tribesmen, and educated enough to state them clearly, it is somewhat in this way that he would explain the national attitude: "We Albanians," he would say, "are the original and autoch-



thionous race of the Balkans. The Slavs are conquerors and immigrants, who came but yesterday from Asia. As for the Bulgarians, they are a Mongol tribe which has no business in Europe. The Russians may call themselves Europeans, but when their consuls come here and lord it over us with their whips, we notice their little eyes and their high cheekbones, and we feel that they too are Tartars. The Servians, under their Tsar Dushan, conquered the country which they have the impudence to call 'Old Servia.' They settled there and drove us back for a season to our mountains. But little by little we have regained our own. 'Old Servia' is Albanian once more to-day, as it always was and always will be. It is true that a minority of Servians remains, protected by Russia. She has even sent up a handful of Russian monks from Mount Athos to hold the sacred Servian monastery of Detchani. Why is it that she defends our hereditary enemies? Because they are Slavs. These so-called 'reforms' are nothing but the device of a Panslavist conspiracy. Why does Russia confine her attention only to the Vilayet of Kossovo, while she does nothing for Jannina and for Scutari? Because there are Slavs in Kossovo. Why does she do nothing to help us with our schools and our language? Because we are not Slavs. These reforms are only intended to benefit the Slavs. Why, then, should we submit to them? Russia tells you that there ought to be Christians in the gendarmerie, and you imagine that we are fanatical because we oppose her. It is not a question between Moslem and Christian at all. There were hundreds of Catholic Albanians in our ranks when we fought at Mitrovitza and at Djacova. In point of fact, when Russia says that there ought to be Christians in the gendarmerie, she means Servian Christians. When the time came for enlisting Christian gendarmes, whom did the Russian consuls recommend? They got together all their own spies, their *agents provocateurs*, the most notorious instruments of the Slav propaganda, and forced the Turks to put them into uniforms and to give them rifles. Shall we allow these men to rule over us? As for

Austria, we all know that her dream is to annex Albania, and she too is a Slav Power. Her consuls are never Germans. They are always Czechs or Croats or Poles. Our programme is Albania for the Albanians, and we do not intend to submit to any foreign domination, and certainly not to that of the Slavs. If the Turks cannot protect us against Panslavism, then we are quite prepared to fight the Turks. We have never accepted their yoke. We have preserved our customs, our language, and our local independence. But we have never paid taxes. We have fought as volunteers for the Sultan in every Turkish war—at Plevna as at Domokos—but we have never worn the Turkish uniform or accepted the slavery of the barracks. You profess to be the friends of the Cretans and the Bulgarians when they defend their freedom. Why do you wish to impose the Turkish yoke upon us? It is, I suppose, because we are not Slavs, or because so many of us are Moslems. That is your tolerance. No, we do not want reforms. We prefer liberty."

My imaginary Albanian has said some things which are absurd and other things which are true. One must look behind words. It was not against reform that the Albanians rose, but against the tightening of Turkish control, and the more distant menace involved in the predominance of Austria and Russia. Europe did a monstrous thing when she entrusted the destinies of Macedonia to two interested Powers. Both Russia and Austria are partisans in the Macedonian chaos. For generations they have been engaged in propagandas of their own, furthering the interests of one race against another to secure their own position and prepare their future claims. It was absurd to suppose that they could play the rôle of impartial arbiters. The Albanians speak the truth when they insist that they are themselves, by virtue of their numbers, overwhelmingly the preponderant population of "Old Servia"; but just in so far as they show themselves incapable of respecting the claims of the Servian minority, they destroy their own natural right to govern.

## § VII.—OLD SERVIA.

Prizrend stands on the low foothills of greater mountains. Its precipitous streets—with the brawling stream, the shady poplar groves, the cool rose gardens of dervish monasteries, the graceful mosques, and the secret, all but castellated houses that rarely expose a timid window to the outer world—rise towards the crumbling Turkish citadel on the hill. It is a hill of memories and vistas. At your feet lies the great plain of Kossovo, where the Servian Empire was shattered at the first shock of the invading Osmanlis. Far in the distance, to the north, is a dark range of mountains which is the frontier of New Servia. To the west, beyond Ipek, rises a vast Alpine wall of purple and white, and beyond it, too, is liberty. It is the frontier of Montenegro, where yet another branch of the Servian race has maintained itself and freedom. And behind lies the greater past. A narrow valley runs up to the mountains behind—on the right a green hill, on the left a bare cliff, and between them, in the distance, the blue peaks of the Schar Dag. In the midst of the valley rises a sheer rock, and on its summit stands the old castle of Tsar Dushan. Here he lived and reigned, a Servian king amid a Servian people.

By some half-ironical convention this country that once was Dushan's, within sight of the two free Servian lands, is known as "Old Servia." It is the Servia that has been. I came expecting to find, as one finds elsewhere in Macedonia, a population by majority Christian, living under the rule of a Moslem minority. Two centuries ago that is what a European traveller would have found. To-day the Serbs are a remnant which has dwindled by emigration, massacre, and forced conversion, to the rank of a mere third of the population. In the two districts of Prizrend and Ipek there are no more than 5,000 Servian householders, against 20,000 or 25,000 Albanian families. In all Old Servia there are not as many Servian families as there are Albanian families in Ipek and Prizrend alone. It was otherwise in the past. History tells of two great emigrations *en masse* from Old

Servia. In 1680 the Servian Patriarch placed himself at the head of 100,000 of his people who had found Turkish rule intolerable, and with their flocks and herds, their cradles and ploughs, they wandered to Carlowitz in Hungary. Fifty years later a second human swarm, 30,000 strong, took the same road. It was the best and the most patriotic element of the Servian population that sought a refuge and a future in a Christian country, and practically every priest in the diocese followed the Patriarch to save his faith. The Servian population which remained, without leaders, teachers, or priests fell a natural victim to the Turks and the Albanians. Whole regions still Servian in blood and language embraced Islam at the point of the sword. The process went on in this forgotten country on the fringe of Europe even within the memory of the present generation. Thirty years ago the broad district of Goraz, near Prizrend, was ravaged, decimated, and converted. Its inhabitants speak only Servian, and as far as they dare they maintain the tradition of their Christian past. They will go to the great monastery of the neighbourhood on its annual festival. The women will often beg a priest to pray for them or to give them holy water, and sometimes they will lie on the ground in the churchyard that the priest may step over them as he carries the Eucharist, in the hope of obtaining a silent blessing. If ever the Turk departs they will venture, no doubt, to return to the faith of their fathers.

Of the rest of the Christian Servian population of Old Servia, for every nine who remain, one has fled in despair to free Servia within recent years. The remainder, unarmed and unprotected, survive only by entering into a species of feudal relationship with some Albanian brave. The Albanian is euphemistically described as their "protector." He lives on tolerably friendly terms with his Servian vassal. He is usually ready to shield him from other Albanians, and in return he demands endless blackmail in an infinite variety of forms. If the Servian has money he pays in money. There is a recognised etiquette even in brigandage. There arrives one fine day an emissary who carries a little parcel which he presents with much ceremony to the headman of the village.

The parcel contains it may be ten, it may be twenty beans, with a cartridge tumbling amongst them. The beans represent silver dollars, and if gold is wanted their place is taken by ears of maize. The cartridge speaks for itself. It is death to refuse. But if the peasants are too poor to be blackmailed there are other methods of exaction. They can be compelled to do forced labour for an indefinite number of days. But even so the system is inefficient, and the protector fails at need. There are few Servian villages which are not robbed periodically of all their sheep and cattle—I could give names of typical cases if that would serve any purpose. For two or three years the village remains in a slough of abject poverty, and then by hard work purchases once more the beginnings of a herd, only in due course to lose it again. I tried to find out what the system of land tenure was. My questions, as a rule, met with a smile. The system of land tenure in this country, where the Koran and the rifle are the only law, is what the Albanian chief of the district chooses to make it. The Servian peasants, children of the soil, are tenants at will, exposed to every caprice of their domestic conquerors. Year by year the Albanian hillmen encroach upon the plain, and year by year the Servian peasants disappear before them. Hunger, want, and disease are the natural accompaniments of this daily oppression. One may gauge the poverty of this country from the fact that a day's wage averages five or six metallics—say three English pence. Round Uskub it stands at tenpence, and Uskub is poor. But then if labour can be had for the asking by a master who has only to toy with a jewelled pistol in his belt the market price is inevitably low. The children grow up half nourished and scarcely clad, and the result, as the doctors of Prizrend told me, is an astonishing prevalence of lung diseases and anæmia in this superb climate with its brisk mountain air, its pure water, and its generous sun. One is a little apt to think of the Albanian question as an interesting diplomatic problem, a fascinating ethnological puzzle. It struck me in a different light on market-day when the peasant women came toiling in, bent and wrinkled, with their babies on their backs, and round their meagre figures

a collection of rags that barely satisfied the demands of modesty. We ask them what they have brought to sell. It may be half a dozen eggs, it may be a dozen. And the price? A halfpenny apiece, or less. And where did they come from? There were some who had come from a village ten and even fifteen miles away. To sell a few eggs for threepence these Servian women will walk a matter of twenty dangerous miles. It is their one chance of keeping alive. The threepence will buy a bag of Indian meal that will serve the family for a few days, eked out with onions and wild herbs. And by next market-day there will be a few more eggs to sell, if the saints are good—unless, indeed, some hungry, unpaid Turkish detachment should pass through the village and requisition the few hens that stand between the peasants and famine.

Those women, in their misery and nakedness, are the other side of the gay picture, of Albanian chivalry. With all my memories of Bektasli tolerance and Arnaut patriotism, framed in a picture of marvellous mountain scenery—the white snows of the Schar Dag, crisp and clean on the mid-summer day when we crossed them, its cold, exhilarating air, its Alpine roses, its hillsides of gentians and forget-me-nots—I realise painfully that I have visited the most miserable corner of Europe.

#### § VIII.—THE FUTURE.

Of the future of Albania it is difficult to write with any measure of comfort or conviction. This gifted and interesting race has awakened too late, and one fears that the crisis in its fortunes must come before it has had the leisure to prepare itself for freedom. It has won no recognition from diplomacy, and the young States which surround it have regarded it as their legitimate inheritance. Greece lays claim to Epirus, and Servia to the plain of Kossovo as far as the mountains which rise behind Prizrend, while Montenegro, the especial *protégé* of the Tsars, has also her ambitions. Carved up among these alien countries, Albania would go the way of Poland, and her dream of a national

existence would have vanished almost before it had begun to inspire. Beyond these minor competitors stand Italy and Austria, each anxious to obtain a share, if not the whole. Indeed, the only hope that seems permissible is that among so many claimants, the easiest and the least dangerous solution may after all prove to be an autonomy upon national lines.

The claim of Greece to Epirus rests on a hoary confusion. The Christian minority of Lower Albania may be Orthodox in religion, but it is Greek neither in language nor in race. And yet one must admit that a Greek occupation of Epirus would not be an unmixed evil. There is a large population which is still Greek in sympathy, and Greek in such culture as it possesses. A great number of the Moslems would undoubtedly return under any Christian rule to the faith of their fathers. In two generations Epirus would be as much Greek as Attica is to-day. For the greater part of the population of Northern Greece is undoubtedly Albanian in origin. The addition of so large an Albanian element to the Greek kingdom would, on the other hand, dilute its Hellenic character still further, and possibly the Albanians would be strong enough to force the Greeks into some reluctant show of tolerance, and even into a tardy recognition of their language. But the chief objection to this solution is, to my mind, that it would rob Albania of its most progressive and enlightened element. An Albania which included Epirus would already contain a considerable population on a relatively high level of civilisation, which might be trusted to leaven the whole mass. Deprived of the Epirotes, Albania would be a little principality of savages whose progress towards order and letters would be intolerably slow.

The case for a Servian annexation in the North is at once stronger and weaker. While there is no considerable Greek population in Southern Albania, there is a large Servian element in the North. On the other hand, there is a traditional feud between Servians and Albanians which would render the peaceable administration of the country under a Servian hegemony more than difficult. The Greek genius exerts a certain ascendancy and fascination over the Southern

Albanians. It has been a civilising influence. It can quote a long and often friendly intercourse, and to bridge the connection there is already a large population of Hellenised Albanians established in the present Greek kingdom—a population as loyal and as advanced as any in the Greek world, and one, moreover, which has contributed more than its fair share to the laurels of modern Hellenism. With the Serbs it is quite otherwise. They have never played the part of civilisers in Northern Albania. So far from regarding them as his superiors in culture the Albanian has learned to despise and to exploit them as his villeins. A Greek dominion in Southern Albania would seem comparatively natural, and would imply no violent reversal of traditional habits of thought. But Servian rule in the North would imply a social as well as a political revolution. The Servian minority already settled about Prizrend and the plain of Kossovo would tend to become a party of ascendancy, and its novel and irritating pretensions would seem to the Albanians peculiarly degrading and offensive. These local Serbs have hitherto held their lives and their property on a species of feudal tenure from their Albanian overlords. That they should become prefects and deputies protected from Belgrade would be an inversion of every custom and an outrage on every prejudice. Moreover, the Servians of Servia have not succeeded in conciliating their local Albanians as the Greeks of Greece have done. When the Southern limits of the Servian kingdom were enlarged after the Treaty of Berlin, the greater number of these Albanians were driven across the frontier, and in the process there were wholesale evictions and uncompensated confiscations of estates. Both races are convinced that the country is theirs by right, and it is difficult to imagine any satisfactory compromise between them.

The Albanians can boast the advantage of actual possession. They form the majority of the population almost everywhere between the Servian frontier and the mountains behind Prizrend. They are also the aboriginal population, and if one goes far enough back, they can regard the Servians, with perfect justice, as intruders and usurpers. On



the other hand, Kossovo was the metropolis and the cradle of the Servian Empire. In Prizrend and in Uskub the great Dushan had his capitals. At the monastery of Detchani, near Ipek, the Servian kings were crowned, and round it gathers all that is most sacred in the legendary memories of an imaginative race. Nor does their historical claim end with the overthrow of Dushan's Empire by the Turkish invaders on the field of Kossovo. Up till the close of the seventeenth century Ipek was still the Servian centre, and its Patriarch preserved the identity of the national Church. It may be true that the Albanians who have colonised "Old Servia" during the past two hundred years were only resuming possession of land which was theirs before the Servian Empire existed. But the methods of their settlement have been those of rapine and usurpation. If they succeeded to derelict and unoccupied lands, it was their ferocity which had rendered them untenanted. Each race has a claim so ancient and legitimate, and their recent relations are so complicated with injustice and the resentment it brings with it, that neither could live happily under the dominion of the other. The Serbs could not establish themselves without serious fighting and long years of coercion, while the Albanians would certainly use authority to complete the exile of the Servian race. The Servians lack the force to make their rule respected; the Albanians lack the civilisation to make their domination tolerable.

Short of the administration of "Old Servia" by some alien Power, which could only be Austria, there seems no tolerable solution save its partition between Servia and an autonomous Albanian State. Partition would certainly be an unnatural expedient. The country is a plain which lies between two ranges of mountains, the northern already Servian, the southern certainly Albanian. But there is no considerable river or well-marked range of hills dividing it which would offer a convenient frontier. If, on the other hand, one consults the interests of both populations, the happiest issue from an awkward dilemma would be to draw a conventional frontier somewhere below the Uskub-Mitrovitza railway, and to give the land to the north to Servia,

leaving the southern moiety to be incorporated in an autonomous Albania. The immediate consequence would no doubt be a serious unsettlement of the actual populations. The Albanians of the northern half would probably decline to remain under the Servian flag, and their place would be taken by Servian refugees from the southern territory. If this exchange were consciously effected, and supervised by neutral commissioners, it could hardly fail to lead to the pacification of the country and to a fair composition between the claims of both races. The chief inconvenience would be that the Servians would be left with a frontier which it would be difficult for them to defend against the predatory raids of the Albanians.<sup>1</sup>

By giving Epirus to the Greeks, Old Servia to the Servians, and by incorporating Dibra in an autonomous Macedonia, it would doubtless be possible to reduce Albania to very modest proportions. But there is no Balkan race save the Albanians which possesses the slenderest claim to the country that lies between Elbasan and Scutari. If those poor and sparsely-peopled highlands were to be created an independent principality, it would be condemned to continual poverty and to a savagery without hope of redemption. It is only by including within the limits of a free Albania all the lands inhabited by the Albanian race, the populous region of Prizrend and Djacova, as well as the more civilised province of Epirus, that a worthy future can be assured to her. The question-begging name of "Old Servia" settles no titles, while the Greek claim to Epirus rests on no better foundation than the confusion of the terms Greek and Orthodox. Europe has fallen into a deplorable habit of ignoring the claims of the Mohamedan inhabitants of European Turkey. Where they are Turkish by race, and form the minority of a population, it is no grave error to discount their existence.

<sup>1</sup> The same problem arises in the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar, where the population is also partly Albanian and partly Servian, but Austria is never likely to renounce the right of military occupation conferred upon her by the Treaty of Berlin. If she were to renounce this territory a union of Montenegro with Servia would become possible, and that Austria is bound at all hazards to prevent.

They have little national sentiment. They can thrive only under a retrograde administration and a Mussulman theocracy. Under any alien Christian rule they invariably emigrate. But the Moslem Albanians are in a totally different case. They form the majority of their race. They have a fervent if primitive national sentiment. They are capable of progress, nor do they owe their position to the favour of an Asiatic conqueror. To deny them a political future because of their loosely-held creed, and to confound them in the fortunes of the Slavs and the Greeks, would be an injustice which only intolerance could explain, an error which only ignorance could excuse.

Autonomy has become a practical policy for Albania because the rivalries of the two Great Powers which aspire to its possession are acute and incompatible. Austria has long aspired to the reversion of Turkish territory ; and Italy, since the failure of her Abyssinian adventure, has been active in asserting her claims.\* Austria starts with many advantages. She is a Catholic Power. She has long enjoyed a protectorate over the Albanian Catholics, and in them she has a powerful army of partisans. Italy, on the other hand, is regarded by the Catholic Albanians as an impious State which has persecuted and imprisoned the Pope. To the northern Albanians the Italians are atheists, to the southernns they are "Latins," and each name serves to excite an inveterate and almost insuperable prejudice. Austria has a further superiority in her wealth, whereas the Italians are regarded as an impecunious race of adventurers who are anxious to exploit the country and to eat up the mineral wealth which it is supposed to contain. The obvious argument in favour of Italy, that she is a Liberal Power, does not appear to weigh with the Albanians as it ought. Their instincts are monarchical and aristocratic, and they do not realise how much they might gain from the generous and sympathetic democracy of Italy.

Their thoughts are for the present so wholly concentrated on the preservation of their language that they regard Austria only as a friend who has recognised and assisted this propaganda. It is true that Austria has subsidised

some of their publications and created a chair of Albanian at Vienna.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, while she assists their struggles outside Turkey, she has done nothing whatever to aid them within its borders. A little pressure at Constantinople would have saved their school at Koritza. But Austria has never been known to display her interest in this practical fashion. She does enough to persuade the Albanians that she is sympathetic, enough to assure them that under her rule they would enjoy full liberty to cultivate their own tongue ; but she does not do enough to civilise them, to develop them, to make them capable of controlling their own destinies. How far she has a conscious motive one cannot say, but it is conceivable that she may find it to her interest that the Albanians should remain relatively savage, advanced enough to wish to be rid of the Turks, but not sufficiently civilised to seem capable of independence. For when the catastrophe comes which makes the maintenance of the *status quo* impossible, the turbulence and the backwardness of the Albanians will constitute the best arguments for an Austrian occupation. It will be urged with much plausibility that an autonomous Albania would be a menace to the peace of every State on her borders, and that the Albanians lack the necessary initiative for their own advancement. The good work of Austria in Bosnia and Herzegovina gives an earnest of success, and unquestionably she has the force and the resources necessary for the pacification of a difficult race. Italy, on the other hand, is untried and without experience in the management of alien peoples, and her best friends are those who seek to dissuade her from the path of Imperialism and colonial adventure. As for the Albanians themselves, they hardly seem to reflect that an Austrian occupation would mean the extinction of all hope of political independence. Some of them have thrown themselves with such whole-hearted enthusiasm into the language movement that they have forgotten the political side of nationality altogether. Others, under one disguise or another, have accepted bribes or subsidies from

<sup>1</sup> Italy has also established a chair of Albanian at Naples, and the popular interest in Albania is growing.

Austria, and this susceptibility to the argument of the purse is perhaps the most distressing aspect of the national character. It is no doubt a trait of all poor peoples, and the Albanians share it with the Scottish Highlanders of the eighteenth century, to whom they bear, in many other respects, a marked and most promising resemblance. The more far-sighted and intelligent Albanians have adopted a peculiarly dangerous line of argument. They say, with some justice, that ten or twenty years of Austrian rule would be the salvation of the country. The Austrians would make roads, introduce schools, and wean the savage tribesmen from their predatory habits, their feuds and their vendettas. But twenty years hence who would care to prophesy that the Austrian Empire will still exist? Those who reason thus know enough of European politics to understand that a break-up of Austria is possible, and even probable. But they fail to realise that Austria, though she may be remodelled or partitioned, can hardly disappear. She must have a successor and an heir, and there is no guarantee that an Albanian province would be able to emancipate itself from one or other of the groups into which Austria may be split. Magyar or Slav or German rule would be even more fatal to Albanian aspirations than the comparatively tolerant *régime* of the present Empire.

But, however strong the current may be which seems to be carrying Albania within the Austrian system, the dermination of Italy to prevent the aggrandisement of her rival has still to be reckoned with. To make the Adriatic what it was in the great days of the Venetian Republic, an Italian lake, is an intelligible ambition. A torpedo-boat can sail in three hours from Vallona to the Italian coast, and Italy is not at all anxious to have the Austrians in such close proximity. But Austria, which has no other exit from Fiume and Trieste, is equally resolved that Italy shall not be the undisputed mistress of the straits. It is fairly certain that either Power would go to war to prevent the other from acquiring so dangerous an advantage as the possession of the Albanian coast. One hopes that this rivalry may mean checkmate to the ambitions of both Powers. One

hears, indeed, from time to time, that Italy and Austria are at one. It is, one suspects, the sort of unity to which Francis I. and Charles V. attained before Pavia, when both were agreed in wanting Milan. But if one chooses to be optimistic, there is warrant enough in official utterances. Addressing the Italian Chamber, after his meeting with Count Goluchowski, in the summer of 1904, Signor Tittoni announced in categorical terms that his Government and that of Austria had come to an understanding. Both undertook to respect the *status quo* as long as possible, with the proviso that when this becomes impossible the solution shall be sought in an autonomy for Albania on national lines. Certainly there seems no other way of avoiding war, and with equal certainty one may predict that so soon as Macedonia in one way or another is released from direct Turkish rule, it will be quite impossible for the Sultan to hold Albania. The example would be too stimulating, the proof of Turkish weakness too overwhelming. Albania can be controlled more or less from Uskub and from Monastir, but if these centres were emancipated, she would become to all practical purposes an insular province, to which Constantinople could neither give an order nor despatch an army corps.

Autonomy, then, is a solution within the range of practical politics. It is also the best solution. The Albanians have the makings of a united people. They are turning already with a pathetic eagerness towards knowledge and civilisation. It would be difficult to allege any reason why they should be denied the right of self-government which has been allowed to Greeks and Serbs and Bulgars. They are certainly not more primitive, more savage, or more turbulent than were their neighbours the Montenegrins a generation ago. Austrian rule, no doubt, would give them material prosperity, but without the stimulus of freedom, and without the education which only independence can confer. Their progress would doubtless be slow; but they do not become levantinised by letters, and I believe that after a generation of schooling they would be, thanks to their energy and their traditions of personal honour, in

some respects the most promising race in the Balkan peninsula. For any elaborate constitutional *régime* they are doubtless unfitted, but their tribal institutions rest upon an admirable traditional system of local self-government which could be adopted without much modification. To select a suitable Prince would be no easy task, but when once he has been chosen, he will find a people whose feudal instincts will dispose them to honour and to obey him.<sup>1</sup> To introduce order and a respect for law will no doubt be the work of years, and even of generations. Wholesale coercion would be a fatal mistake. But it should be possible from the first to mark out certain areas, such as the plain of Koritza, together with all the larger towns, within which murder will not be tolerated. The remoter and more mountainous regions can only be conquered gradually. But schools should be founded everywhere, and it should be understood that the persons of teachers must not be used as targets for rifle practice.

Higher education should be made compulsory for the nobility, and much might be achieved by encouraging the *beys* on one pretext or another to familiarise themselves

<sup>1</sup> There are already two pretenders in the field. (1) The Marquis Aladro alleges descent from the family of Scänderbeg. He is a Spaniard of some diplomatic experience, wealthy and somewhat advanced in years. When invited by a representative Albanian to submit proofs of his descent from Scänderbeg, he replied that he had no sympathy with that sort of "Byzantinism." The fact seems to be that the last male descendant of George Castriot was killed at Pavia. The Marquis Aladro can hardly be considered a serious candidate. His knowledge of Balkan conditions may be gauged by an offer which he once made to found an opera-house at Scutari! (2) The second claimant is a certain Prince Albert Ghica, who comes of a family of Albanian origin, long resident in Roumania. It has given Hospodars (Governors) to the old Wallachian provinces and diplomats to the modern kingdom, and enjoys princely rank in the Austrian Empire. Prince Albert is a comparatively young man with plausible manners and a dubious past, who speaks fluent French, and knows neither one word of the Albanian language nor the elements of Albanian geography. He has been chosen honorary president by one of the numerous clubs of Albanian immigrants in Bucharest, and on the strength of this social honour poses in European hotels as the chief-elect of the Albanian people. He talks of venturing in person into Albania and raising the flag of revolt. We shall see.

His claim is interesting, only in so far as his programme contem-

with civilisation by travelling in Europe. The making of roads and the careful policing of them, by breaking down the isolation of the wilder clans, should serve at once to soften their manners and to create a sense of national unity. The mere prohibition to carry arms would alone effect a revolution in manners. Nor should the creation of a good gendarmerie prove a difficult task. The fidelity of the Albanians ought to make them an excellent material for police. The chief difficulty will be financial, since the wilder tribes resent direct taxation, and consume few imports on which a tariff could be placed. The feudal structure of Albanian society puts a powerful lever in the hands of a tactful and magnetic ruler. If by means of a court and a college he can succeed in spreading among the nobility an enthusiasm for culture and for orderly progress, the whole people must follow their example.

The conversion of the landed class to Islam involved the majority of the race in apostasy. A contrary movement among them towards civilisation would have results no less considerable. It is fairly certain, for example, that under a Christian Prince vast numbers of Albanians would return to Christianity—a change from which the women, at

plates a union of the Vlach and Albanian causes. He asserts, probably without any basis, in fact, that he has the support of the Conservative party in Roumania, and may therefore be backed by the Roumanian propaganda in Macedonia and Albania. His modest dream is a Vlach-Albanian State embracing all the five vilayets of Albania and Macedonia. But the Vlachs are neither numerous nor warlike nor unanimous, and they are much too cautious to rise in support of such a chimera as this. As for the Albanian chieftains, one does not see them accepting the leadership of a denationalised adventurer from Bucharest.

The Khedivial family of Egypt might, if it possessed a cadet of character and parts, prefer a claim with some measure of reason, inasmuch as Mehemet Ali, the founder of the House, was an Albanian soldier of fortune. But no member of this family has so far shown any practical interest in Albania, or done anything to assist the national propaganda. On the whole it would be best to seek a Prince from some reigning family of Europe. He must not be a Slav, since the prejudice of the Albanians against all Slavs is quite ineradicable. It would be well that he should not be a Catholic, since he will have so many Orthodox subjects who have been taught to regard the Latins as worse than the Turks. A Protestant would probably be the most generally acceptable candidate.



any rate, would have much to gain. One hopes, too, that Bektashism, relieved from the necessity of conforming outwardly to Islam, might develop into an independent cult whose features would be humanity and tolerance. It is quite conceivable that this strange and gifted race, whose mind has so long lain fallow amid the loneliness of its white mountains, may yet contribute some new and original element to European civilisation. The countrymen of Lord Beaconsfield, on whom lies the responsibility for conserving Turkish rule in Europe during thirty years of turbulence and stagnation, could hardly discharge their debt to the subject races of the Balkans to better purpose than by assisting the Albanians in their struggle for education and emancipation. Something might be done at present to aid them with schools and even, perhaps, with missions, and, when the catastrophe comes, to assure them an opportunity of working out their destinies in freedom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If ever an autonomous Albania comes into being the educated Albanians now dispersed in Roumania and Egypt, or kept in a sort of official imprisonment in the Turkish army or Civil Service, will undoubtedly return to lead their countrymen. There are men among them who would be a credit to any race. I cannot do better than translate some passages from a letter which reached me the other day from an Albanian friend, a nominal Mohamedan, who holds a high place in the Turkish army. As a military commandant in a certain garrison in Asia Minor during the Armenian massacres, wielding large civil powers, he earned golden opinions by his tolerance and his humanity. The letter serves to prove how little these men, even when they are Turkish officials, share the attitude of the average Turk. It also shows to what level of culture these Albanians often manage to attain in Turkey, cut off though they are from European schools, and rarely able to obtain any book which treats of serious topics in a modern spirit.

"I have long waited for an opportunity of writing to you and expressing myself fully and frankly on the situation and destiny of the peoples of the East, whom the trend of events has placed in perpetual conflict, because of differences arising from religion, manners, political interests, and historical tradition. They lack as yet a protector who should be at once liberal and strong, capable of satisfying their national tendencies in such a way as to conciliate their bitter dissensions. The Ottoman Empire, mistaking its own interests, persists in its system of oppression and despotism, refractory to European advice, incapable of any change, by reason of its ingrained vices, social and political. For the moment it seems incapable of preserving its integrity or of conforming itself to the demands of modern principles. It prefers to submit to serious measures of intervention which wound its dignity, rather than adopt of its own free will, reforms which are

necessary as much for its own self-preservation as for the happiness of its conquered peoples.

"The Albanians, Christians as well as Moslems, have for centuries shed their blood for the honour of the Empire—the Catholic mountaineers have always fought under the standards of their own chiefs against the Russians, the Serbs, and the Montenegrins, and the military history of the Empire is full of examples of the heroism of these brave soldiers. But by way of recompense for these services the Empire has decreed the suppression, by the most Byzantine of methods, of the cultivation of their language, the first of the intellectual rights of man. You tell me that you will endeavour to create an interest in the Albanian question in England. In that way, my dear friend, you will perform a humanitarian work. The general prosperity depends on the enfranchisement of every branch of the human family. Those who are at the head of civilisation are in duty bound to succour their backward brethren. Truth will emerge from the ocean of mystery only through the highest development of the greatest number. Above all, the unhappy Albanians are the elder sons of the European family. The remarkable affinity of the Albanian language to Sanscrit proves them to be the earliest emigrants of the Aryan race who settled in Europe. The descendants of the ancient Pelasgians are not lacking in intelligence, in bravery, in force and independence of character, and though Islam has conquered Albania, their morals have remained intact. Their conversion to Islam has only changed their belief, from a faith in the Trinity to a belief in the unity of God, but the vices of Islam, polygamy and slavery, have never infected the Albanians. The Ottoman conquest has been able neither to enslave nor to corrupt their indomitable temper.

"To raise themselves to the level of their European brethren, the Albanians need nothing but the light of modern science. The right of cultivating their language will be the gage of their enfranchisement. English diplomacy, by assisting the Albanians in this legitimate direction, would accomplish a service worthy of its renown and of its reputation for disinterested philanthropy. The Albanians are generous enough to be eternally grateful to their benefactor. By the enfranchisement of the Albanians English policy might put an end to the interminable complications of the East. The Albanians are moderate enough not to put forward exaggerated pretensions like those of the Greeks and the Bulgarians. England, by using her influence on behalf of the autonomy of Albania, would increase her predominance in the balance of power in the Balkans. She would gain for ever an element faithful to her policy, and, to speak more precisely, a vanguard against the dangerous invasion of Panslavism in the East. We are not opposed to the enfranchisement of our neighbours of other races, but at the same time we wish to preserve our natural frontiers. Greece has found her natural limit towards the North. "Old Serbia" is nothing but an historical term, a memory of the ephemeral reign of the Servian Emperors. Montenegro has already seized several Albanian districts. Macedonia, within its proper limits, ought to have a cosmopolitan autonomy, neutral and subject to European control, since it does not possess a distinctive national character—all the races of the Balkans are mixed there pell-mell. As for the Sultan, he must be contented with the sort of nominal suzerainty to which he is already accustomed. He can find in Asia concubines and flatterers and spies enough to dazzle with a display of his legendary greatness."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PROBLEM OF REFORM

**I**T was towards the close of the year 1902 that European diplomacy rediscovered the Macedonian question. General Tzoncheff's incursion over the Bulgarian frontier, followed as it was by an outburst of official ferocity and the flight of some thousands of peasants, was certainly an agitating incident. It is not probable that diplomacy was greatly exercised over the fate of the peasants whose homes had been burned; the disturbing thing was the proof it afforded that the Macedonian Bulgar had at length been educated and organised to a point at which he felt himself capable of fighting for his liberty. It is always at this point that enslaved populations begin to interest diplomacy. So long as they can only bend their backs to the lash they cause no disquietude and excite no concern. What happened on a small scale in autumn might well repeat itself on a large scale in spring, and a Macedonian revolt, fostered by Bulgarian sympathy, might end by provoking a war between Turkey and the vassal Principality, and this, in its turn, might involve the European Powers. There was for a time considerable stir in the Embassies. The facts were investigated and chronicled; the refugees were relieved; the semi-official press of Russia and Austria began to talk of the duty of forestalling events, and suddenly in December Count Lamsdorf visited Vienna. Russia was of the two Powers the more alert and enterprising. She had just been celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the War of Liberation by a demonstration in the Shipka Pass, at which an imposing Imperial deputation joined hands

with the Russophil Bulgarian Government of the day, while the aged General Ignatieff was allowed to deliver a speech which revived the Panslavist watchwords of an earlier generation. The fraternisation in the Shipka Pass was followed by a further development. Madame Bakmetieff, the clever American wife of the Russian Diplomatic Agent in Sofia, organised the relief of the Macedonian fugitives who wintered in Bulgaria, and under the influence of reports of atrocities, which certainly did not err on the side of moderation, the Russian press began to concern itself once more with the affairs of its enslaved race-fellows in Turkey. The probabilities are that it was an artificial movement, for when Bulgaria got rid of the Russophil Daneff Cabinet, and installed a nationalist (Stambulofist) Government in its place, and the Macedonian Bulgars made their revolt without waiting for the word of order from St. Petersburg, a sudden chill overtook charitable hearts in Russia, and the rouble played no part in succouring the villagers of the devastated Monastir region.

These signs of the times were not lost upon the Sultan. It seemed as though Russian interest in the Balkans was awakening, and in the hope of averting intervention he declared his purpose of introducing spontaneous reforms. In December, 1902, he promulgated his own reform programme. It contained one clause of importance—that which appointed Hussein Hilmi Pasha to the post of Inspector-General of the three Macedonian vilayets. Meanwhile Count Lamsdorf was elaborating the first Austro-Russian scheme at Vienna, and the assent of the other European Powers was readily obtained. The scheme itself was feeble and half-hearted. It remained a dead letter. It was obliterated by the insurrection of August, 1903, and superseded by the Mürzsteg programme. But it embodied one principle of vital and enduring importance. It recognised the right of Austria and Russia as the two "interested" Powers, to devise a scheme of reform and to superintend its execution. Their consular staffs acquired a privileged position, and exercised a sort of nominal control, ineffective indeed, but none the less sufficient to ensure

them precedence over the representatives of the Western Powers. This meant that four of the six Powers which signed the Treaty of Berlin abdicated their responsibilities and their rights. To be sure it was carefully explained that Austria and Russia were only the "mandatories" of Europe, which controlled their action and invested them with its authority for a specific and limited purpose. But such formal reservations are apt to be ignored in practice. Nothing that has happened since the granting of this mandate is to be compared with it in importance. In a moment of haste and levity the Western Powers declared in effect that since they are disinterested they are also indifferent. Public opinion in England and France was uninstructed and unorganised. France was glad to oblige her ally; official England under Mr. Balfour felt no anxiety to make her moral influence felt. The fatal mandate was given, and looking calmly at the forces involved, I see small hope that it will ever be completely withdrawn. Between the formulation of the first and second Austro-Russian schemes the humane parties in England, France and Italy marshalled their ranks, concerted their action and shaped their demands. They insisted that the fate of Macedonia was a European concern, and intervention a European duty. They protested against the abandonment of its struggling races to the cold patronage of two selfish and interested guardians. They formulated a plan for an international control with a European Governor as the source of authority. But, despite the adherence of Lord Lansdowne to this proposal, the second reform scheme repeated with some modifications the essential features of the first, in so far as it recognised the principle of the dual control. Later, as the war in the Far East and the constitutional movement at home demonstrated the utter incapacity of Russia to carry out her mission in the Balkan peninsula, a fresh opportunity arose of revising her mandate. There was truth in the argument that two Powers, if they were unanimous, sincere, and well intentioned, might achieve more in the way of far-reaching reform and vigilant control than the cumbersome machinery

of the Concert. Events have proved that Austria and Russia are slow, apathetic, and irresolute. They care only for their own Imperial interests, and one member of the partnership has lost her prestige and her freedom of action. No sincere mind can suppose that Russia, incapable of setting her own house in order, bankrupt, defeated, and preoccupied, can spare the energy or command the authority necessary for a reforming mission in Turkey. The Grand Ducal clique is absorbed in anxieties more intimate than the anarchy in Macedonia. But despite a renewed attempt by Lord Lansdowne, undertaken very quietly in January, 1905, to place the Western Powers on terms of equality with Austria and Russia, the mandate of 1902 is still formally valid, and has even been renewed. It is obvious that England, Italy, and unofficial France are aware of the fatal error they committed in a moment of apathy, but their concern, though real, is not sufficiently keen to overcome the interested obstinacy of the two Eastern Empires.

The claims of Austria and Russia to a privileged position in Macedonia rest on very diverse grounds. Of the two Powers, Austria has, I think, the sounder pretension. At least she has a large material stake in the country. The railroads are mainly Austrian concerns, although it cannot be said that their prosperity is seriously affected by the disorder which prevails under Turkish rule. Their profits are independent of their earnings, since they are derived from a kilometric guarantee which is secured by the tithes. But the trade of Salonica and Uskub is very largely in Austrian hands.<sup>1</sup> One meets commercial travellers from Budapest in Macedonian inns. The local Jews, who largely control the business of Salonica, readily enter into relations with their co-religionists in Hungary and Austria, and undoubtedly this considerable and beneficial intercourse is threatened by disorder, as it would be expanded by good government. Salonica is connected by direct railway with Vienna, and by the Lloyd steamships with Trieste, and there is no gainsaying the fact that Macedonia might be,

<sup>1</sup> One ought not to forget, however, that 60 per cent. of the foreign trade of Macedonia is said to be British.

under happier conditions, an important market for Austrian produce. There are small colonies of Austrian subjects in Uskub and Salonica; and the railway employes, though many of them are Greeks and some Italians, are on the whole to be reckoned as the pioneers of Austrian influence. The consulates are well staffed and filled for the most part with men of energy and ability. It would be difficult, however, to say with any precision what Austrian policy in Macedonia really is. It is easy, of course, to accept the current suspicion and to believe that Austria is stealthily but actively preparing for the occupation of the western half of Macedonia. The Bulgarians undoubtedly believe this, and the prospect fills them with grave alarm. I have no doubt that the more ambitious of the younger men in the consular and diplomatic services cherish such schemes. It is even hinted that they sometimes go so far as to encourage the insurgent element, with the idea of provoking complications serious enough to warrant the armed intervention of Austria. There is a whole ingenious legend, which it might be rash to dismiss as quite baseless, which links both Austria and Germany in an elaborate plot to seize Macedonia. Germany, it is said, aims at appropriating the purely German provinces of Austria proper, and encourages Austria to compensate herself by absorbing the Slavonic elements of the Balkans. I have even been assured, by a gentleman who was a member of a Bulgarian Cabinet in 1897, that overtures were made to his Government through a German diplomatic agent, suggesting a partition of Macedonia. The portion to the west of the Vardar Valley was to go to Austria, that to the east to be annexed by Bulgaria. I can give no reason for my scepticism, and yet I distrust this story—at least in this definite form. That individuals cherish such projects is doubtless true. But the whole policy of Austria betrays an irresolution incompatible with any conscious and determined policy of annexation. The aged Emperor is averse from adventure. Neither the Germans nor the Magyars are anxious to increase the Slavonic population, and the clericals are probably unwilling to add to the Orthodox element in the

Empire. Moreover, the military position of Austria is unfavourable. The railway is hers, but the railway passes through Servia. Nor could she easily advance from Bosnia along the Mitrovitza-Uskub line, for Montenegro and Servia would menace her flanks, and the Albanians are not to be relied upon to assist her. At sea she is neutralised by Italy, which would certainly resent an attempt to land an Austrian army of occupation at Salonica. Some acute minds suspect that she has intentionally put forward futile reform schemes, well knowing that they would fail, with the idea that their failure would make an occupation inevitable. But it is quite as probable that her policy is merely hesitating and weak because it is cautious and conservative. She does not wish to encourage revolution. She dreads any inconsiderate vigour which might conceivably provoke an armed conflict. She temporises, plays with reform, and endeavours to stave off a crisis, precisely as all bureaucracies do within their own territories when confronted by a demand for reform which they hardly understand. It is weak and culpable conduct, but it may be sincere. The most plausible theory is that Austria has no fixed and official policy at all in Macedonia. There is no doubt that she aims at absorbing Albania. If opportunity favoured, she would possibly be equally glad to extend her sphere of influence to Western Macedonia, but I doubt if there is evidence for suspecting the Foreign Office, as distinct from some of its more energetic agents, of working actively in favour of any design so considerable. For it is, after all, no mean ambition. The port of Salonica would be a great acquisition to a Power which is almost land-locked. As a commercial harbour it has incontestable advantages over Trieste and Fiume. It was made to be the busy *dépôt* of a great civilisation, and even the Turks have hardly been able to destroy its natural advantages. Under any civilised administration it would soon rival Marseilles. As a naval centre it would be even more invaluable to Austria, for it lies beyond the Italian sphere of influence, and its value could not be affected by a blockade which would close the mouth of the Adriatic. It might easily be made the great



port for the trade between Asia and Continental Europe, and raise Austria to the level of a great maritime Power and the mistress of the Levant. All this is very clear, and one cannot wonder that the dream of acquiring Salonica floats before the imagination of Austrian patriots. But the route between Salonica and Vienna lies through Belgrade, and the Power which intends to acquire and utilise Salonica must absorb and conquer not merely Macedonia, but Servia as well. While King Milan lived, that might have been easy—he often dreamed of entering the Austrian Empire as a sort of feudatory vassal—but even if the Servians were incapable of serious resistance, the Concert might have something to say to so drastic a remodelling of the map of Europe. It is the fashion to talk of the humble peasants who are struggling for some poor measure of liberty in Macedonia as a subversive and revolutionary element. They deserve the term far less than the Austrian Imperialists who entertain such schemes as this. But it must be confessed that Austria does not give evidence of the vigour and unanimity necessary for the realisation of such a programme. Each race within her borders has its own egoistic schemes. There are Germans and Czechs, Magyars and Croats. But there are no Austrians, save, perhaps, a handful of bureaucrats in the diplomatic service. These men may cherish their ambitions of expansion and conquest. But it takes a people to make an Empire.

Of Russian policy it is equally difficult to write with assurance. For who makes Russia's policy? To answer the question would be to disentangle the intimate and complicated relations between the Tsar, the Grand Dukes, and the several ministries. It is a habit with a certain English school to talk as though Russia were a single entity which cherishes long views and works with amazing cunning and competence towards their realisation. The odd thing is that Russia entertains precisely the same delusion about us. It is merely a prejudice and an exaggeration which has grown up in the course of a long and bitter rivalry. Some of the Russian agents in Macedonia and the Balkan peninsula generally, undoubtedly seemed to be men

of an active and enterprising temper, who would gladly have favoured a policy of aggrandisement and intrigue. The war has taught us that the bureaucracy imposes only the slackest discipline upon its agents. If one were to judge Russian policy by the attitude of her consuls, one would certainly arrive at the conclusion reached by the Greeks, that Russia still favours the Bulgarians, subsidises the revolutionary Committee, ferments insurrection, and aims at consolidating her position in Turkey by using her kinship with the local Slavs to crush all other elements of the population. The Turks will add that she is steadily working to undermine their prestige and corrupt their integrity by every form of moral and political humiliation which an unscrupulous foe can devise. Such is the popular view in the Balkans, and, if one accepts the purely local standpoint, it is the natural and inevitable view.<sup>1</sup> When we turn, however, to what is generally known about the public attitude of the Russian Government, the facts tell a diametrically opposite tale. It may be undermining Turkish authority, but its influence has been supreme in Constantinople ever since 1890, when English prestige began to wane. It certainly stood by the Sultan during the Armenian butcheries. Towards Bulgaria it has been cold, and at times hostile, since the *coup d'état* of 1885, when Eastern Roumelia was added to Bulgaria proper, and the

<sup>1</sup> The popular view of the Balkans is, of course, no evidence at all. In that atmosphere of intrigue and duplicity the lightest suspicion at once passes current as fact, and no native is so poor-spirited as to criticise evidence. The Greeks treat the statement that the Russian Government subsidises the Bulgarian Committees as a proposition which requires no demonstration. But the same Greek journalists who advance this charge also profess to believe that the English Relief Fund was spent in financing rebellion! An Albanian agitator of some experience once assured me that he knew for a fact that Boris Sarafoff had received a vast sum (naming the amount) from St. Petersburg. He went on to add that the English Balkan Committee had given him £50,000! The first statement, I fancy, deserves no more credit than the second. I once distributed a few hundred pounds to some famine-stricken villages in Crete, which were sent to me from the late Duke of Westminster's fund. I happened to be on terms of personal friendship with one or two of the Russian naval officers at Canca. It was at once assumed that I was a Russian agent, and that the money came from Russia! On such bases are Balkan politics built.

Russian officers who were training the Bulgarian army left it in the lurch to face Serbia alone. It is true that the relationship is apt to grow more cordial when a Russophil Ministry comes into power at Sofia. The Tsar stood god-father to little Prince Boris, and there was a flicker of the old fraternal sentiment during the celebrations in 1902 at the Shipka Pass. But in general Russia has been at no pains to conceal her chagrin. When she created a free Bulgaria, she doubtless intended that it should be a mere vassal of her own Empire. She did not foresee the growth of a strong independent State. She accuses Bulgaria of ingratitude. She detests her radical and progressive tendencies. She realises that Bulgaria belongs in spirit to the West, and that the reactionary traditions of M. Pobiedonostseff's Empire<sup>1</sup> have as little attraction for her as for any of the non-Slavonic peoples of the Balkans. Time was when the Greeks, because they were Orthodox, were the favoured *protégés* of Russia. The Bulgarians succeeded them in her favour, and now they in turn have proved themselves unworthy of her patronage. The result is that the ideal of a free and autonomous Macedonia no longer attracts her. She was willing enough to liberate Macedonia in 1878 when she supposed that a Great Bulgaria, stretching from the Danube to the Ægean, would be a mere vestibule of the Russian Empire. To-day she hesitates, for she has no guarantee that a free Macedonia would serve her political ends. Nothing, indeed, is more curious than the way in which Russia and England have exchanged *rôles* since 1878. Then Disraeli opposed the liberation of Macedonia because he feared that a Great Bulgaria would strengthen Russia's power in the Balkans. To-day Lord Lansdowne supports the programme of autonomy and liberation because he knows that the complete emancipation of the Bulgarian race would erect a permanent barrier against Russian aggression. This reversal of policy had taken place as early as 1885, when Eastern Roumelia achieved her union with Bulgaria. England warmly supported the change ;

<sup>1</sup> This was written before Count Witte's coming to power. I am not sure that it is yet out of date.

Russia urged Abdul Hamid to reduce the rebel province by force of arms. The Bulgarians have not forgotten the conduct of their late liberator in that crisis. No doubt Russia is unwilling to abandon altogether her Panslavist traditions.<sup>\*</sup> She still whispers in Sofia, "A day will come." She still protects the Bulgarian Church, which she created. It is possible that her agents at times extend a dubious and furtive encouragement to the revolutionary Committees, and certainly they are often ready to rescue suspected insurgents from prison and exile. But her real policy is probably her public policy. She is doubtless sincere when she denounces the revolutionary organisations as subversive and criminal elements, and in her official *communiqués* throws upon them the whole responsibility for the anarchy of Macedonia. A consistent despotism could take no other view. It cannot with safety be liberal abroad and reactionary at home. There is an informal Holy Alliance, in which Sultan, Kaiser, and Tsar make common cause against any group of men who are struggling for freedom. There is too much in common between the Macedonian insurgent and the Russian terrorist for a modern Tsar to encourage the one while he dreads the other. And so it happened that when in 1902 it became clear that something must be done to avert insurrection and stave off war, Russia joined with Austria in proposing the barest minimum of reform. Both Powers probably foresaw that their prescriptions would fail. They took care to inaugurate a form of intervention which could not lead to autonomy, while it might easily pave the way for a joint occupation. In 1876, during a graver but somewhat similar crisis, Russia proposed a scheme of local autonomy for the various Slavonic provinces. In 1902 her scheme was an Austro-Russian control. It is obvious that when the day arrives for her to claim her inheritance in Turkey, she will not attempt to instal a native

<sup>\*</sup> Since the close of the Japanese War the Moscow Panslavist League, which used to be under the patronage of the late Grand Duke Serge, and is now controlled by one of his creatures, M. Tcherep Spiridovitch, has shown signs of renewed activity, and is once more turning its attention to the Balkans.

tenant. She will manage the estate herself. But it is no less clear that it was not part of her plan to precipitate an immediate crisis. The Japanese War was already casting its shadow over her path. She intended to procrastinate and gain time, to secure a recognition of her right of intervention but not to exercise it, to substitute one futile scheme of reform for another, and to make good her claim at law while postponing to her own convenience the moment for enforcing it.

It is necessary to give here some account of the use which Russia and Austria have made of their mandate, if only because the outlines of their reform schemes are likely to serve in some sort as a basis for future reforms.

The earlier scheme came into force in February, 1903, as a sort of refinement and amplification of the reforms which the Sultan had drafted spontaneously in December, 1902. The pivot of the new plan was the Inspector-General, Hussein Hilmi Pasha, who was supposed to be "controlled," wherever he might happen to be, by the local Austrian and Russian consuls. Hilmi Pasha is certainly a man of rather exceptional ability, with much more culture than is common among Ottoman officials. He has read a little, and speaks French well. But he has never been out of Turkey in his life, and his ideals, for all his superficial education, are simply those of the Hamidian court. He had been Governor of the Yemen, and was, I fancy, a trusted "Palace" man. Certainly there is a ring in his deep and musical voice when he speaks of his Imperial master, which suggests that he may be among those who have been hypnotised by the singular personal charm which all unprejudiced witnesses ascribe to Abdul Hamid. Hilmi Pasha has something of the same magnetism. His manner is grave, courteous, and distinguished. He suggests the Arab rather than the Turk. One's first impression is that he is profoundly sincere and completely honest. His optimism is contagious, and one experiences in his presence that rarest of all emotions in the East—a thrill of hope. Further acquaintance modifies the impression, and one realises that one has to deal with the first

comedian of Europe. But the process of being deceived is still agreeable. It is a species of flattery, and it is hard to feel indignant with a performer so finished and so graceful. Besides, the man is an indefatigable worker, always at his desk, always with some paper in his hand, always accessible, and ever ready to extend his working day far into the small hours of the morning. It is the method rather than the will which is at fault. The whole conception of reform in Hilmi Pasha's mind, is the production of results on paper which will impress his constant visitors, the consuls, and figure ultimately in some official report which will confound Europe with the amazing progress of Macedonia under his paternal sway. I can quite believe that he deceives himself. He is an incorrigible bureaucrat, who spends his days in a haze of tobacco smoke with telegrams and statistics as the only realities before him. He rarely quits his audience-chamber and then only to pay formal calls on consuls, and I should doubt whether he has ever had the curiosity since his arrival in Macedonia to visit a single one of the villages which he governs, or to converse with a single representative of the two million peasants whose fate depends upon his telegrams and his edicts. One can handle statistics without touching fact. I shall not readily forget my first interview with him in May, 1903, when with pardonable pride he read me his report upon the progress of his reforms. He boasted that over a thousand brigands had been arrested since his arrival in Macedonia—indeed, nearly all of them had voluntarily surrendered. It was a proof of energy. Ten minutes later he assured me that a thousand penitent offenders had been released from prison. It was a proof of clemency. Away from the magnetic presence, it dawned upon me that the figures tallied oddly. The brigands in league with the gendarmes had simply walked in at one door of the gaol to the glory of Abdul Hamid and out at the other. But the figures were there. The reforms had been accomplished, and on any sceptic Hilmi Pasha would smile blandly and meet his objections (as he answered mine when I told him that everywhere the peasants were so terrified that they dare not come to market), with a magnifi-

cent gesture and a sonorous and conclusive "Grâce à Dieu la tranquillité règne partout."

In effect I think the appointment of Hilmi Pasha was actually mischievous. It marked a further stage in the insane centralisation of the Turkish system. Instead of dealing as before with three Valis among whom there might chance to be one honest and independent personality, the Palace need now reckon only with the Inspector-General. At the same time the task of espionage was rendered easier and the consequent confusion more complete. The Valis, jealous of Hilmi Pasha, ignored him and corresponded directly with Constantinople. The minor prefects and governors (*caimakams* and *mutessarifs*), instead of reporting through the Valis, were in direct relations with Hilmi Pasha. He himself was surrounded with spies, and the military commanders were peculiarly anxious to restrict his authority. It is the sort of complicated and superfluous muddle which allows the Sultân to feel absolutely secure. Hilmi Pasha, however, cannot be ubiquitous. He spends his time between Uskub, Salonica, and Monastir, passing, as a rule, three or four months in each of these great administrative centres. His arrival virtually deposes the local Vali, who sulks, or plays chess, or goes off to harry the Albanians, while Hilmi Pasha and all the troupe of the travelling reform company occupy the stage and overhaul the stock properties. For a brief season the administrative machine works at high pressure. The unhappy telegraph clerks forget the meaning of sleep, and all the penmen of the administration are set to compile statistics and draft reports for the consuls. The police, the prefects, the revenue officers, the civil and ecclesiastical judges, hurry to the room where careers are made, and for three months the Vali is the only idle official in all the vilayet. But at length the strain is relaxed and the restless reformer betakes himself to another sphere of action. The Vali begins once more to frequent his office. The telegraph clerks enjoy their slumbers, and the traditional Turkish motto, "Yavash Yavash," which may be roughly rendered, "Ca' canny," breathes repose where all was agitation. An abnormal

slackness succeeds to an unwonted stir.<sup>1</sup> The discredited Vali has no authority or prestige left to enforce even a moderate standard of energy, and in a very few days the state of the reformed province is worse than before. But the statistics and the reports are still in evidence. Who shall doubt that the enervated and demoralised administration has been thoroughly reformed? *Littera scripta manet.* • •

The outline of the reforms which were attempted, both on the initiative of the Sultan, and of the two interested Powers, during the year 1903 must be briefly sketched—it never was more than an outline. (1) The finances were supposed to be placed in some mysterious way under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Ottoman Bank—an international institution controlled mainly by French capital. It opened new branches in Uskub and Monastir, and it was supposed to act as paymaster and treasurer. But it had no powers of control. It banked the supplies—if any—confided to it, and paid without question the sums demanded of it. (2) The civil and criminal courts were reorganised on an ambitious scale. The number of professional judges was increased, and their nominal salaries raised—a reform which cost nothing. This was actually a reactionary step. Under the old system the civil tribunals were largely composed of elective members, local notables chosen by the various religious communities of the chief towns—Turks, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Jews. They were not trained lawyers, but they were usually men of substance and reputation, who were not compelled to live by bribes, and they were amenable to public opinion. Their fault was not so much venality as timidity. They dared not assert themselves against the executive officials. To substitute for these men a hungry crowd of unpaid professional Levantine lawyers who are venal as well as timid, was a very doubtful “reform.” (3) There was much

<sup>1</sup> I am far from implying that the slackness is worse than the stir. I, for example, was beset with spies and escorts as long as Hilmi Pasha remained in Monastir. As soon as he departed I was allowed to ride about, a free man.



talk of a reform of the gendarmerie. Some Christians were admitted to the ranks, but the officers, as before, were all of them Moslems. These new recruits were drawn from the lowest and most abject class of the population ; they were rarely, if ever, Bulgarians, and they were employed only in menial duties. At the same time a few Swedish and Belgian officers were engaged to reorganise the "reformed" force. They were well paid, and some of them were easily made to understand that their functions were purely ornamental. They were allowed to give advice, but I should doubt if it was often, or indeed ever, followed.

(4) Great importance was claimed for a drastic reform affecting the rural guards of the villages—the *bekchi*, as they are called—retired brigands most of them, who prey upon the Christian peasants and bring an intimate domestic tyranny into their daily lives (see pp. 47-48). It was agreed that Christian villages instead of having to endure Moslem guards might elect Christians. But two reservations sufficed to render this privilege worthless. In the first place only landowners had the right to vote, so that villages which formed part of the estate of a Moslem *bey* were no better off than before. In the second place the Christian guards were not allowed to possess rifles. They wore their little badges, but their only arms were a cudgel or in some cases a fowling-piece. When the first *bashi-bazouk* with a rifle appeared on the scene, the only course open to the Christian rural guard was to hide in the nearest haystack. Moreover, by nominating a Christian *bekchi* the village did not necessarily get rid of its old tyrant. He handed over his badge and his title to a Christian underling, but he kept his rifle and drew his pay and indulged in his ravages as before. Such were the reforms in their first stage. Their uselessness merely served to encourage the insurgents in the belief that freedom could only be won by force of arms. Hilmi Pasha's real occupation during the first seven months of his tenure of office was not reform but repression. The insurrection of August was the fruit of his activity.

In September, 1903, the Emperor and the Tsar met at the

hunting-lodge of Mürzsteg, near Vienna, and the second Austro-Russian Reform Scheme was the result of their deliberations. Six months of procrastination followed, and it was not until April, 1904, that it came fully into operation in Macedonia. Its results have been as disappointing as those of the first essay in amelioration. The state of Macedonia is if anything worse than it was in 1902. Something, however, has been gained. A further blow has been struck at the direct sovereignty of the Turks ; and though the principle of an exclusive Austro-Russian control remains intact, some place has been found in the new scheme for the other Powers. It makes an advance towards the ideal of an international protectorate.

The first draft of the Mürzsteg scheme was a large and ambitious charter of reforms. (1) The main point was the nomination of two Civil Assessors representing Austria and Russia, who were to sit, as it were, at the right and the left of Hilmi Pasha and guide him in the straight path. Unfortunately their powers are purely advisory. They may investigate abuses through their travelling secretaries, they may demand redress, and they may suggest improvements. But it is open to Hilmi Pasha to refer any and every matter in dispute between himself and his two advisers to Constantinople. He is the mere shadow of the Palace, and they are only the eyes of the Embassies. In short, there has been no decentralisation, and the Palace, checked to some slight extent by the Embassies, is still supreme in Macedonia. The Civil Assessors are merely glorified consuls, with higher rank but no ampler powers. The sole result of their presence in Macedonia is that their Governments have more detailed and authoritative reports of the old anarchy, the habitual corruption, and the incurable stagnation of Turkish rule.

(2) A rearrangement of administrative areas was promised, doubtless with the object of disentangling the rival races whom the Turks have sedulously confounded. Nothing has been done to give effect to this, beyond the exclusion of the purely Greek and Albanian districts from the scope of the reforms. Old Servia, Elbasan, Koritza, and Selfidje are

left untouched by any European control, thus leaving within the area of reform a Macedonia practically identical with that of the Treaty of San Stefano, and for the most part Slavonic. But the old boundaries of the vilayets remain unaltered.

(3) There has been an experiment of doubtful value in the direction of better taxation. For the first year (1904) two small groups of villages in the Monastir vilayet have had their tithes collected, either directly from the peasants or indirectly through the landlords, but without the intervention of tax-farmers. As yet, however, there is no evidence that this experiment will be generally adopted, and it has been extended for a second year (1905) only to three cazas. It leaves the landowners with all their old powers.

(4) For two years no attempt was made to reorganise the finances, but at the moment of writing the Powers are engaged in imposing a system of international control upon the Porte.

(5) The reorganisation of the courts of justice is promised, but nothing has yet been attempted, or even proposed.

It is only (6) in the reorganisation of the gendarmerie that any progress has been made, and even here the gain is rather in the recognition of principles than in the achievement of actual results. The discussion of the basis of the proposed reform of the gendarmerie occupied six weary months, during which the Turks resisted and fought for time, while only the British Ambassador exhibited any particular eagerness for a satisfactory outcome. It was decided that the new gendarmerie should be the nucleus of an international force. Austria and Russia enjoy no special privileges. The Commander is the Italian General de Giorgis, but, unfortunately, his authority was surrendered from the beginning, since he entered the Turkish service without reserves, and seems to have held it a point of honour to take his instructions loyally from his Turkish paymasters. Under him is a staff of five superior officers representing the Powers concerned, who have not entered the Turkish

service or donned the Turkish uniform.<sup>1</sup> Each has his own *secteur*, and the allotment of these areas presented several thorny diplomatic problems. Indeed, the Powers debated this question as if they were delimiting spheres of influence, or partitioning Macedonian territory, instead of merely assigning districts to be reformed. Russia obtained the town of Salonica and the western portions of the vilayet—an important point if it be true that Austria covets the port. To Italy was given Monastir, and if her aim be to permeate and ultimately occupy Southern Albania she has here a valuable centre for her propaganda,—though to be sure the purely Albanian districts of the Monastir vilayet are excluded. Austria settled in Uskub, which would be a natural centre for the penetration of Northern Albania—though here again the Albanian district known as “Old Servia” was excluded. To France was given the town and sandjak of Serres, a populous and intensely disaffected district which marches with the Bulgarian frontier. England, anxious only to efface herself in the presence of so many rivalries, was content to receive the little district of Drama, a sparsely peopled and fairly tranquil region of no political importance, where the population is mainly Moslem, and, so far as it is Christian, is chiefly Greek.

The original idea, when the negotiations began at Constantinople, was apparently to create a genuine international gendarmerie for Macedonia with a staff of some sixty European officers in executive command, assisted by a still larger force of European non-commissioned officers. This would indeed have been a reform worth attempting. It was a proposal which would have made Europeans personally responsible for the order and security of Macedonia. Officers in the towns and sergeants in the larger villages would have guaranteed life, honour, and property to the peasants. The native element, well and regularly paid, and liable to instant dismissal in the case of misconduct, would soon have learned discipline, and might even

<sup>1</sup> There is also one German officer who has no *secteur*, but occupies himself with the school in Salonica.

have grown enthusiastic in the discharge of its duties. The villagers would have realised that Europe had at last accepted a real responsibility for their lot, and from the moment the new system came into working order the activity of the insurgents would have ceased. But the Turks stoutly resisted this plan. Austria and Russia did not press it, and England abandoned it when our Ambassador pointed out that it would be difficult to get the Turks to consent to a scheme which involved the command by Christians of a force in which the rank and file is three-parts Moslem. In that rather naïve excuse for abandoning a good and far-reaching project Sir Nicholas O'Connor passed an unconscious criticism on the whole Mürzsteg programme. It leaves the ideal of Turkish ascendancy untouched. As long as we tacitly accept the axiom that no Christian may command a Moslem, we have not even begun to reform. When they abandoned the idea of putting Europeans in executive command of the new gendarmerie, the Powers accepted a serious diplomatic defeat at the hands of the Sultan and condemned their whole scheme to futility.

All idea of a genuine international gendarmerie was thus set aside, and in its place the Powers were content to send a staff of officers—at first only twenty-five in number, now forty-eight—who are variously described as instructors and inspectors. Their task is to reorganise the existing Turkish force and to some extent to educate it. But its command remains exclusively in Turkish hands. The European officers may improve the existing material by means of the school which has been started in Salonica, and they may weed out the more obviously incompetent and corrupt. But they can give no commands. The Turks may or may not use the reformed gendarmerie; the new officers cannot so much as order the arrest of a criminal or organise the capture of a brigand band. Nor are they even permitted to investigate the grievances of the population in their districts. As soon as they arrived they were besieged by peasants anxious to present petitions detailing their wrongs. The result was the issue of a circular by Hilmi Pasha which forbade the new officers

to receive petitions. If an abuse does come under their observation they have no authority to remonstrate with the Turkish officials in their sphere. They can only report to their staff officers, who in turn report to De Georgis Pasha, who may or may not carry the matter to Hilmi Pasha's judgment throne. In the last resort the appeal is to Constantinople. Some little good, however, has been achieved.\* The gendarmerie is now regularly paid, and, while it does little or nothing to maintain order, it is no longer the scourge it was. It does little good, but not much evil.

The officers where they happen to be keen and energetic do exert some personal influence, as even an unofficial European in the interior can always do. The Turks pay some attention even to private remonstrances, if they are firmly but tactfully made; and the knowledge that grave scandals may be reported exercises a deterrent effect. The English Relief Agents were able to do some good in this way during the winter of 1903-4; and the new officers are doubtless able to make their presence felt in the same direction, but they have no recognised right of interference.

In January, 1905, Lord Lansdowne put forward a number of proposals which would have gone far, had they been accepted, to solve the Macedonian problem. He aimed at the decentralisation of the administration, and the internationalisation of the control. He objected to the claim of Austria and Russia to be the only "interested Powers" in Macedonia. He suggested a drastic reduction in the numbers of the Turkish troops quartered in Macedonia, and he would have placed them under the command of the civil authorities. He outlined a scheme for a new Board of Control, occupied mainly with finance but free at the same time to handle political questions, armed with "administrative and executive" powers, and consisting of delegates appointed by England, France, Germany, and Italy, together with the Austrian and Russian Civil Agents. Unfortunately, this excellent programme was accepted only in part by Austria and Russia. The demand for an in-

ternational Financial Commission, which was ultimately presented to the Sultan in May, did indeed admit the delegates of these four Powers to an equality with the agents of Austria and Russia, but it confined the operations of the Commission exclusively to finance, and made no explicit demand for direct executive powers. The Sultan of course resisted, and when the delegates of the four Powers joined the Civil Agents at Salonica, early in October, the Turks refused them official recognition. Coercion followed, on leisurely and somewhat timid lines, and Germany alone refused to share in the naval demonstration. The customs-houses of Mitylene and Lemnos were occupied, but it is not certain that the unanimity of the Powers would have stood the strain of more drastic measures. Early in December a compromise was arranged. The Financial Commission will be constituted under the presidency of Hilmi Pasha, and will include in addition one Turkish member. It will act in conjunction with the Imperial Ottoman Bank, to which the work of audit is entrusted. It will employ three travelling inspectors who are to enter the Turkish service, but they enjoy no right of interference and no administrative authority, and can deal with abuses only indirectly by reporting to the Commission. The Commission, in its turn, is a quasi-deliberative Council, which has no executive powers. It stands completely outside the Turkish administration, and can act only through Hilmi Pasha, who is its executive officer. Should he refuse to carry out its decisions, as he legally may, its only resource is to appeal through the Civil Agents to the Embassies in Constantinople. Finally, while the Commission may enact reforms in taxation and modify the drafting of the budget, the Sultan is allowed a right of veto upon its decisions. Neither the European delegates nor their inspectors are the hierarchical superiors of the local Turkish officials, who depend as before for promotion on the good will of Hilmi Pasha and the favour of the Palace. It is not probable that the Turks will often meet a unanimous decision of the Commission with a direct defiance, but obviously this scheme gives them many oppor-

tunities for obstruction and delay. They will execute its decisions half-heartedly and in bad faith, while making the most of every conflict of opinion among the delegates themselves. These are for the most part inexperienced men, and among them only M. Steeg, the capable and popular representative of France, starts with the necessary knowledge of Macedonia. The scheme would work well if Hilmi Pasha were independent enough and wise enough to further it. But he is merely the Sultan's nominee, and will doubtless be expected to defeat in detail an obnoxious innovation which his master was compelled to accept in principle. It seems doubtful whether, even in the sphere of finance, it can achieve much more than the gendarmerie reforms have done for public order. But at the best its scope is limited. It may relieve the peasants from some oppressive burdens, but it will not suffice, without a remodelling of the law-courts and the gendarmerie, to render their existence tolerable. It puts no check on the mischief which Hilmi Pasha may do by fostering racial strife. It will not make the highways safe or the markets accessible, and to men whose first need is security, a scientific budget will seem a useless luxury. But none the less the creation of this new Board goes far to complete a sort of charter of international right for Macedonia. It limits Turkish authority in theory, and opposes (still in theory) a genuinely European institution as a barrier against the ambitions of the interested Powers. To this extent Lord Lansdowne's recent diplomacy has redeemed the error of his earlier concessions to Austria and Russia. There is now a sort of scaffolding of reforms built about the decaying edifice of Turkish government. The state of the interior is no better than it was, but the machinery of reconstruction is ready whenever Europe acquires the resolution to use it.

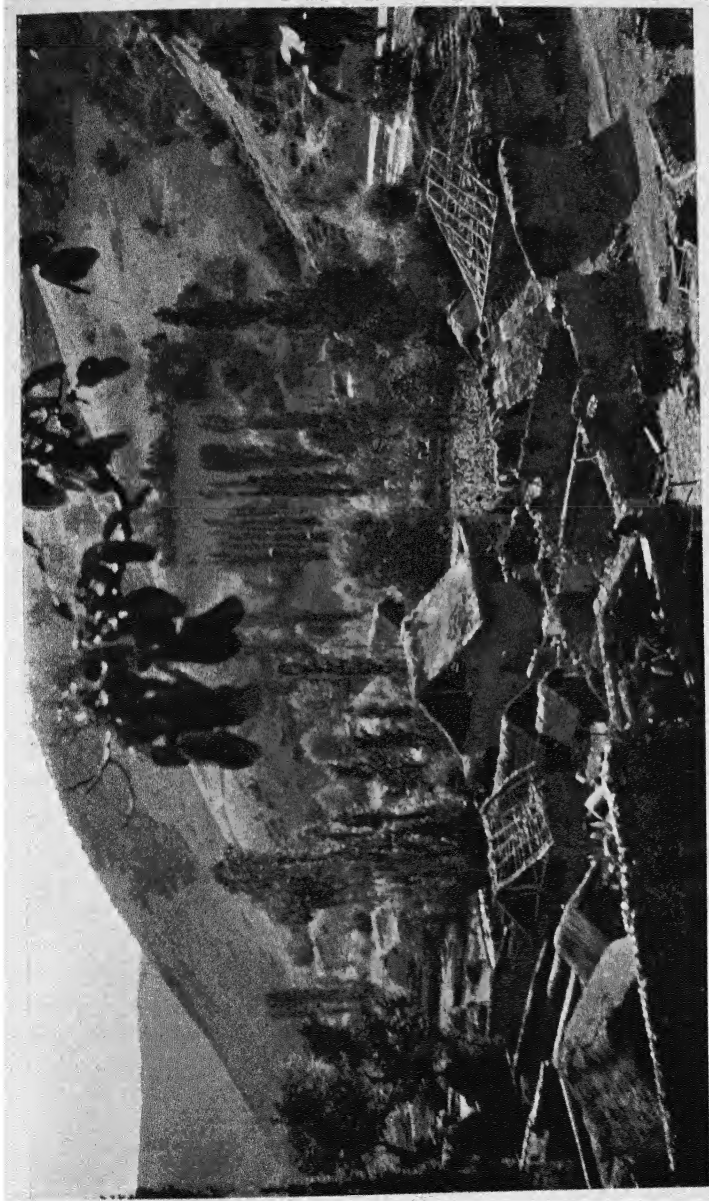
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The Mürzsteg programme aimed at something more than the improvement of the Turkish administrative machinery. It has done a very little in this direction, and when it is



complete it may do more. Its chief aim, however, was to bring some measure of appeasement, to restore order, to re-establish confidence, to repair devastation, and, in a word, to remove the motives for rebellion. Here it has failed, and the failure is so conspicuous that it has actually aggravated the normal anarchy. The Macedonians were encouraged to hope; the loss of their hope has deepened their despair and increased their recklessness. The reforms left the Turks supreme in all administrative matters. They used their liberty to resort to all the old devices of repression and provocation. They still seemed to contemplate an eventual war with Bulgaria, and to make a pretext, they tried to drive the Bulgarians to desperate courses. They were for ever mobilising their troops, calling out the reserves, and accumulating armaments. The troops lived on the peasants and drained the exchequer. Mutinies were frequent and discipline was lax. Under the plea of searching for arms they harried the villages and carried on their perquisitions, with the usual accompaniments of rapine and brutality. A typical outrage occurred in February, 1905, at the Bulgarian village of Kuklish, where, according to the report of a Russian gendarmerie captain, 64 houses out of 105 were burned, 38 unarmed peasants killed, including two women and a baby, five persons wounded, and eleven women violated. The whole place was pillaged, and the officers made no attempt to check the savagery of their men. It is worthy of note that the "reformed" gendarmes who were present behaved exactly like the unregenerate soldiery.<sup>1</sup> As in 1903, the migratory Macedonian labourers who annually visit Constantinople in search of work were confined to their villages and forbidden to travel. A curfew ordinance was enforced, which renders any peasant abroad after sundown liable to be summarily shot. Half the refugees from the Adrianople region have been unable to return, and their lands were occupied by Moslem "squatters." In the Monastir vilayet nothing has been

<sup>1</sup> Similar affairs occurred during the spring and summer of 1905 at Zervi, Konopnitsa, Mogila, and elsewhere.



A BULGARIAN VILLAGE NEAR OCHRIDA A YEAR AFTER THE INSURRECTION, SHOWING HOW LITTLE HAD BEEN  
DONE TO REPAIR THE DEVASTATION. (OCTOBER, 1901)



done beyond the distribution of a grant, which averaged £1 per family, to rebuild the burned villages. Nearly all the rural Bulgarian schools are closed because the teachers, as political suspects, are forbidden to give instruction. Lastly, with the evident intention of fomenting the feud between Greeks and Bulgarians, Hilmi Pasha has handed over a large number of Bulgarian village churches to the Greek faction. But the worst feature of all is the complicated racial strife, a sort of furtive civil war, which devastates the country. The Turks watch this internecine contest, not merely with tolerance, but with satisfaction. The *rayahs* are at war among themselves, and the master may fold his arms. But the real responsibility lies with the Government, which connives at the vendetta and seeks to profit by it. The Turks, despite their vast armaments, have proved once more their total incapacity to maintain even an outward semblance of order.

The Mürzsteg programme has failed, largely because it attempted to reform Macedonia without reckoning with the Macedonians. It was an advertisement to all the world that the Near Eastern Question was open at last. It bore on its surface the marks of transition. No one could imagine it to be final, and no one could suppose that, having recognised the impossibility of Turkish rule, the Powers would ultimately shrink from drawing the logical conclusion. It announced to every race in the Balkans that the end was approaching, and inevitably it accentuated their latent rivalries and hostilities. The Turks, wounded in their prestige and restricted in their authority, were tempted to prove that they still possess a certain vigour and some capacity for resistance. "If we must go," said they, "we will go fighting"; and while they opposed a sullen and passive resistance to the reforms, they prepared for the decisive struggle with the Bulgarians, partly by the usual measures of repression, partly by cementing their alliance with the Greek faction, and partly by making ready for a war with the Principality—a war for which the pre-occupation of Russia seemed to present a golden opportunity. As for the Christian races, the nearer the decisive

moment approached, the acuter became their jealousies.<sup>1</sup> If the Turks were going to be elbowed out, each wished to secure its own foothold in advance. The insurrection of 1903 had left Europe with the impression that the Bulgars are the dominant element. Inevitably the Greeks were tempted to assert themselves. The Mürzsteg scheme showed signs of drawing over again the old boundaries of the San Stefano Treaty. Hence the zeal of the Greeks in loosing their guerilla bands over all the debatable country where the Greek party has a footing. Europe might not like their methods, but at least it would be compelled to recognise the vitality of "Hellenism." All this was natural, and might have been foreseen. As little can the Bulgarians afford to disarm. They can trust neither Europe, nor the Turks, nor their fellow-Christians. Their revolutionary Committee, with all its bloody and violent methods, is the one weapon they possess. Quiescence would be interpreted as satisfaction, and 'with these outlines and tentatives of reform they cannot possibly be satisfied. Their battle is only half won, and until they realise that Europe has taken up their cause in earnest it would be folly for them to disband their organisation. Nothing less than an anarchy so intolerable that it threatens to develop into formal war, ever induces the Concert to act with decision. The ability to create such an anarchy at will is the only effective means which the subject-races of Turkey possess of recalling Europe to her pledges and her responsibilities. The Committee will not dissolve until we impose some solution which has an air of finality ; and until the Committee dissolves, there is no hope of peace in Macedonia. It is futile to talk of suppressing it. The Turks are incapable of such a task, for it has behind it a dour and virile race, a race which is ready to make sacrifices to win its freedom. When once a serious European control is imposed it will be

<sup>1</sup> Several Servian bands appeared in the North, while the Greeks ravaged the South. They were less successful than the Greeks, because they had to meet the hostility not only of the Bulgarians but also of the Turks.

superfluous to suppress it. It will disband of its own free will.

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It is clear that the Mürzsteg scheme holds the field only because the two Powers responsible for it are unwilling to face the patent fact of its failure. They may extend it and even strengthen it, but so long as they hesitate to demand executive powers, it is vain to hope for any real progress. While the Sultan is master of Macedonia, there will be neither reform nor peace. Through whatever further phases of transition the crisis may pass, it must be solved in the end by the imposition of direct European control. The only question about that control, is whether it shall be exercised by two Powers or by five—whether, in other words, Macedonia is to be partitioned between Austria and Russia, or whether under one disguise or another it is to be raised into an autonomous province under international protection. To suppose that Austria and Russia sincerely believe that the *status quo* can be maintained for ever, is to accuse them of an incredible imbecility. But they stoutly oppose any form of autonomy. The inference is that the ultimate solution to which they lean is that Macedonia should be absorbed by themselves. They may not seek to provoke the catastrophe—they may even wish to postpone it. But they are not blind to what Mr. Roosevelt would call their “manifest destiny.”

It is difficult to discuss the consequences of the partition of Macedonia between Austria and Russia, because both these Empires seem to be approaching a period of transformation. If Austro-Hungary should in any sense of the word “break up” after the death of the Emperor Francis Joseph, if the Germans should detach themselves or even cease to be the dominant race in Austria, and if at the same time the Magyars should achieve a completer independence, the Austria of the future will become in character if not in name a Slavonic federation. In such a union the Serbs, the Montenegrins, and the Western Macedonians might ultimately find a place side by side with the Poles, the Czechs, and the Croats, without any sense of incongruity or any

consciousness of submitting to an alien domination. Nor is it otherwise with Russia. If the present movement of liberation realises the hopes of the more resolute and enlightened wing of the Zemstvo party of reform, the Russian Empire will become a liberal Union, in which Poles, Finns, Ruthenians, and Armenians will enjoy a measure of national freedom, while sharing in the larger life of a great Slavonic Federation. To such an Empire the Bulgarians and Macedonians might safely confide their liberties, with every prospect of gaining by a close association with kindred races which boast an older and more developed civilisation. To some minds such a solution would present great attractions. It seems to offer all the guarantees for liberty and for a healthy variety of types which the system of small nationalities possesses, while it is free from the taint of parochialism and racial egoism. The exaggerated and militant nationalism of the Balkan peoples is undoubtedly a curse to themselves, and an obstacle to civilisation. It is preferable only to the brutal uniformity which the present Russian tyranny imposes. The middle course of federalism presents a hopeful escape from the present choice between nationalism and imperialism. But these after all are remote chances. Austria in all likelihood will not "break up"; and Russia, when she obtains a genuine constitution, will doubtless have to pass through a long and troubled evolution, before she attains the ideal of a tolerant and liberal federation. We have to deal with Austria and Russia as they are.

The first question, so far as Austria is concerned, is whether, on the whole, the interests of the Macedonians would be best served by their incorporation in the Empire on the terms which Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoy. Undoubtedly they might meet with a worse fate. They need above all things a period of repose and education. Under Austrian rule they would enjoy a fair measure of personal liberty, and every opportunity for material development. The roads and the railways would be improved, the police organised, the courts purified, the schools fostered and agriculture encouraged. Capital would flow

in, and before a generation had passed, the present anarchy and poverty would be a remote memory, and Macedonia with its broad plains under drainage and tillage would support three times its present population in comfort and even in affluence. The peasants are materialists, and for a time at least they would ask for nothing better. But after twenty-seven years of Austrian rule, the Serbs of Bosnia are far from being contented or loyal, though undoubtedly they have much to be grateful for. They enjoy no more freedom than the Italians did under Austrian rule two generations ago. There is no liberty of speech or of the press. Von Kallay, who invented the system, used to relate with a grim smile that the first book which he placed on the censor's index was his own "History of the Serbs"! Every symptom of national feeling is repressed, and there is one direction in which the excellent new roads do not lead—to Servia. The Bosnian Serbs are cut off from their race-fellows of the kingdom as completely as if a sea divided them, for the Austrian police watch the frontier. The administration is at great pains to prevent faction fights between its Moslem, Orthodox, and Catholic subjects; but those who know anything of its methods are wont to accuse it of undisguised favouritism towards the Moslem and Catholic minorities. The more numerous Orthodox Serbs who remember their gallant struggle against the Turks, and their ambition to join the Servian kingdom, have to be repressed, discreetly and humanely no doubt, but still repressed. There has been as yet no real development of free local government; such municipal institutions as exist are entirely dominated by the bureaucracy. Austria, in short, has done more to develop Bosnia than to educate the Bosnians. She would doubtless follow the same methods if she were allowed to assume the guardianship of Macedonia. For five years, perhaps even for ten, it would matter little; but the Bulgarians and the Vlachs have too much virility and too keen an instinct for organisation, to accept the position of minors indefinitely. The revolutionary Committee has fostered the democratic spirit, and sooner or later they would begin to resist a too paternal government. Moreover, they have



now acquired the consciousness of nationality. They would resent an arrangement which threatened to cut them off for ever from the eastern half of Macedonia and from the Bulgarian principality. The Exarchist Church would provide a link between the three severed limbs of the Bulgarian people as the Catholic Church knits the Poles together, and Austria would maintain her ascendancy only by making incessant war upon the sentiments of her subjects.

The case against a Russian occupation is incomparably stronger. Whatever sentiment of fraternity may now unite Bulgarians and Russians is no guarantee against the usual proceedings of the Russianising party. They would make war upon the Bulgarian language, subject the now independent Exarchist Church to the Russian Holy Synod, and foist upon an essentially manly and democratic race a system of personal government as reactionary as that of the Turks. The non-Slavonic races would fare even worse—Jews and Greeks would be treated as are the Armenians in the Caucasus, and the Turks might be used against the Christians as are the Tartars round Baku and Tiflis. But, indeed, all this is so obvious that one need not insist upon it. The Macedonians have not struggled to throw off the yoke of the Turks in order to court the fate of the Finns and the Poles.

It must not be forgotten that the destiny of Macedonia involves the future of most, if not all, of the other Balkan States.<sup>1</sup> If Austria and Russia were allowed to divide Macedonia between them the independence of Servia and Bulgaria would become the merest fiction—if it were even so much as that. If Austria obtains Salonica she will certainly wish to control the railway which links it with Vienna, and that railway runs through Nisch and Belgrade. Already Servia finds herself elbowed and jostled by too many neighbours. A rather domineering Austria holds the gates of the West, a jealous Bulgaria faces her on the East.

<sup>1</sup> This aspect of the question has been overlooked by the *Spectator* and the *Standard*, which are now inviting Russia to come down to Constantinople.

Only the road to Salonica is open. With Austria entrenched along her southern frontier and camped across the Vardar, she would be virtually throttled; and if she wished to escape complete absorption, she could do so only by adopting an attitude of submission and humility that would be scarcely less degrading than actual conquest. The case of Bulgaria, with the Black Sea Fleet commanding her ports and a Russian army of occupation settled in Eastern Macedonia and Adrianople, would be no better. If she dared to assert her independence she would be crushed, if she bowed to superior force her independence would be merely nominal. Servia, though her peasants are prosperous and contented, is not exactly a credit to civilisation, and one cannot say that her political extinction would be a serious loss to Europe. But Bulgaria is a vigorous and progressive State, whose public and official life moves on an incomparably higher plane than that of Russia. Her absorption in an autocratic Empire would be a loss to Europe and a defeat for freedom. Should Servia and Bulgaria be confounded with Albania and Macedonia in the two illiberal Eastern Empires, one may even doubt whether Roumania, Montenegro, and Greece could maintain more than a feeble and precarious existence as the vassals and parasites of their all-powerful neighbours.

In Disraeli's day the prospect of Russia and Austria establishing themselves upon the shores of the Ægean, and dividing the Balkan Peninsula between them, would have sent our navies to the Dardanelles and brought our armies from India. To-day we should view such a development with displeasure perhaps, but hardly with alarm. Indeed, our passion for remote adventures has almost brought us to forget that we are a European people. It is well that the Jingo of our modern music-halls is less interested in Turkish affairs than he was in 1878. We are happily too enlightened to argue to-day that we are necessarily injured because Russia may be aggrandised. From the old half-barbarous standpoint of the "balance of power," such an increase of territory and population as the partition of the Balkan Peninsula would bring to Russia and Austria, would

have been thought a disaster of the first magnitude to ourselves. But if such reasoning no longer appeals to civilised people, there is a point of view of which we need not be ashamed, from which such a change in the map of Europe would seem deplorable and even monstrous. To the three liberal nations of the West it ought not to be indifferent that races capable of liberty, and eager to share in the general life of the freer half of Europe, should be smothered within the reactionary systems of two conservative Empires. It is worth an effort to keep them within reach of the humaner influences which are building up a kindlier and juster society undisturbed by the ambitions of hired soldiers and professional ruling castes. By surrendering the Balkans to Austria and Russia we should condemn their peoples to a retrograde political life, and at the same time strengthen the forces of militarism and despotism in Europe. It may be objected that the little States of the Balkans have given as yet few proofs of enlightenment or capacity. At least they have shown themselves as capable of parliamentary government as Austria, and more zealous for freedom than the dominant classes in Russia. But the Balkan peoples have not yet had their chance. With a liberal settlement of the Macedonian problem these little communities will acquire for the first time in their history the possibility of a free life of their own. Nothing so much as this disastrous question retards their development at present.

Loaded with armaments, honeycombed by the secret intrigues of Austrian and Russian agents, preoccupied by external questions, obsessed by the shadow of massacre and the dread of war, overrun by refugees and disturbed by the violence of the revolutionary Committees which find a haven and a base within their borders, Bulgaria, and in a less degree Servia and Greece, lack the leisure to pursue their own development. The grossest Chauvinism runs riot among them ; and while a chaos of barbarism lies at their doors, civilisation and the ideas for which it stands seem remote and irrelevant. They are partisans in the rivalries of populations less developed than themselves ; and although a frontier holds him at arm's length, the Turk

has still the power to haunt and degrade their lives. We are often impatient at the comparatively slow progress of the Balkan States towards stability and enlightenment. But so long as we condemn them to live the turbulent life of borderers, we have no right to our disappointment or surprise. They can have no worthy or tranquil career until the question of Macedonia is solved ; as they can hope for no permanent or independent existence if it should be absorbed by Austria and Russia.

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The forces which are making for a solution of the Macedonian question by some arrangement which would pave the way for its partition between Austria and Russia may prove triumphant, but there is enough evidence of a will to resist such a calamity among the other three Powers to make it worth while to discuss the alternative of an international control. The conditions which a solution at once practical and liberal ought to satisfy, may, I think, be set out somewhat as follows :—

(a) It must, if possible, avoid war as a necessary preliminary. It must, therefore, give no evident and unfair advantage to any one of the rival Balkan States. At the same time it must not handle the Sultan so brusquely as to compel him to defy Europe. Some show of force will probably be necessary before Abdul Hamid accepts any genuine reform. But unless the conditions are too onerous, a bloodless naval demonstration before Salonica or Smyrna will be quite sufficient. The Turks on these occasions do not so much require compulsion as a pretext for yielding. They will submit to superior force, but the force must take a visible and obvious form. If, on the other hand, any attempt were to be made to drive the Turks utterly out of Macedonia, they would doubtless contest every stage of the retreat and cover their course with ruins.

(b) The solution must be promising enough, and final enough, to induce the revolutionary Committees to dissolve, or at least to transform themselves into innocent political organisations.

(c) The problem is not so much how to dispossess the

Turks of power, as how best to substitute direct European control for the personal rule of the Sultan and the Palace clique.

(d) A satisfactory scheme must commend itself to all the minorities concerned, Moslems as well as Greeks and Vlachs, as one likely to guarantee equality of treatment and even opportunity for growth.

To state these conditions is to rule two solutions out of court, for each of which some cogent arguments could be urged. Macedonia could not be partitioned among the neighbouring Balkan States unless the Turks had been utterly crushed by a disastrous war; nor would the Sultan readily consent to a nationalist autonomy of the Cretan type. This latter solution, indeed, would offer no adequate security to minorities. The Greeks would resist a Bulgarian hegemony and the Bulgarians would find it difficult to be tolerant. As for the Moslems, the unfurling of an autonomous national standard would be the signal for their emigration. Without further preface I will venture to suggest the outlines of a possible constitution which seems in my judgment to avoid some of the main difficulties.

1. Since the chief object of a reform of the administration is to withdraw the actual government of Macedonia from Constantinople, I am of opinion that the international authority should be a board of Delegates from the Five Protecting Powers, who would reside in Macedonia, enjoy a large independence of action and communicate with their own Governments directly without the formality of referring for instructions to the Embassies. This Board should enjoy all the authority of a Ministry in a constitutional country. If it were composed of the class of men who form the consular corps in Salonica I believe it would work harmoniously and well.<sup>1</sup>

2. It would, I think, be worth while to try the experi-

<sup>1</sup> I assume that Germany would probably wish to stand aloof, as she did in the case of Crete. She has her own reasons for refusing to join in any concerted action to coerce the Sultan, and she cynically disavows any humanitarian concern as to the fate of Macedonia. She would not be likely to send more than a representative with a watching brief.

ment of appointing a Turkish Governor-General. He might be nominated by the International Board, though for form's sake the Sultan's approval should be obtained ; or, *vice versâ*, he might be chosen by the Board from a list to be submitted by the Sultan. The Board would have to be armed with the right of dismissal. His appointment should be for a fixed term, which might be renewed indefinitely, and he should be guaranteed a pension which could be forfeited only by misconduct gross enough to bring about his dismissal. The Sultan must have no right to dismiss.

I believe that a reasonably intelligent and tolerant Turk elected on these conditions would govern sensibly and with dignity. He would not be in any real sense of the word a Turkish official, still less would he be an emissary of Yildiz Palace. Knowing that he could not be removed by the Sultan, and that he could rely upon an assured future, he would have every motive to serve Macedonia well. At the same time his duties should not be large, since the real work of administration should be performed by Europeans. But his appointment would serve two purposes. In the first place it would "save the face" of the Sultan and give a show of reality to his suzerainty. In the second place it would conciliate the local Mohamedan population, induce them to give the new *régime* a fair trial, and assure them that Europe intended to treat them not merely with justice but with consideration. To the old-fashioned Turkish country gentleman it would mean a great deal, that when he went in to Salonica or Monastir he would still find a Mohamedan seated in the *konak* enjoying the title of Governor, and treated with formal and ceremonious courtesy by the infidels who had been admitted to the administration. If the Governor were a wise and tactful man, and accepted the new order of things with a good grace, his personal influence on behalf of a policy of conciliation would be worth an army corps. He would earn his salary if he would merely repeat the sort of anecdotal and proverbial philosophy which the Turks love, to all who called upon him—turning the moral on behalf of peace. One has to remember that the Moslem population will feel aggrieved and humiliated by the im-

position of European control, and an arrangement which would soften its regrets without endangering the success of the reforms would be well worth a trial.<sup>1</sup>

3. The same reasoning which tells in favour of a Mohamedan Governor-General should induce us to accept a number of Moslem prefects (*Caimakams*). I doubt if it would be necessary to have any Valis at all, but some of the *Caimakams* might rank as Pashas. In districts mainly Greek or Bulgarian the *Caimakam* should be of the faith of the majority, but where the Moslem minority is at all considerable it would be wise to appoint a Turk. The Governor-General should have the right to appoint these officials, after consultation with the International Board. Their functions, like his own, should be mainly formal and personal—to act as local representatives of the idea of conciliation, and not to attempt, as the old *Caimakams* did, to concentrate every imaginable function of government in their own hands. In a very few peculiarly turbulent and difficult districts the prefect ought perhaps to be an experienced European—preferably an ex-consul or vice-consul.

4. Whatever arrangement may be made, it is to be foreseen that the Palace will attempt to maintain its old system of espionage and interference. To obviate this and to emphasise the fact that the Governor-General is not responsible to the Sultan, it might perhaps be well to allow Abdul Hamid to nominate a special Imperial Commissioner of

<sup>1</sup> It is more important that the Governor should be a Moslem than that he should be a Turk. It might be possible to find a really well-educated candidate in Egypt, Tunis, or Bosnia, if the jealousy of the Powers permitted. I have adopted this suggestion of a Mohamedan Governor-General only after a good deal of reflection and hesitation. There is much to be said in favour of driving out the Turks altogether, and appointing some European Prince to preside over an autonomous State. But such a solution could hardly be attained without war. If war does come, the problem will be vastly simplified. But even in that event there is something to be said for a policy that would conciliate the local Moslems. The plan of nominating a Turk, however, could scarcely be final. It would bridge over a period of transition, and pave the way for a more natural and durable arrangement. I have tried here to suggest the minimum of change consistent with any real reform. But if the crisis becomes violent, and a catastrophe cannot be averted, we may as well solve the whole question at one stroke by appointing a European.

his own, who would enjoy no executive powers whatever, but would have the right to speak to the International Board in the Sultan's name. Such an arrangement, though apparently a concession to the Palace, would really give the new Macedonia the character of a quasi-foreign State. The other officials might then be cashiered immediately if detected in any direct correspondence with Yildiz Kiosk.

5. The present system, consecrated by the Mürzsteg programme, by which each Power is responsible for a special area, is a thoroughly mischievous arrangement. It is objectionable, because it tempts the Powers to treat their districts as spheres of influence, and to employ themselves in securing their own position instead of executing reforms. There ought to be uniformity so far as local circumstances permit, and it is manifest that the methods of English and of Russian officials will show a very wide divergence. A better plan would be that each Power should assume responsibility for one department of the Administration. In this way the International Board would be a genuine Ministry, though necessarily of a bureaucratic type.<sup>1</sup> Austria, which has done such excellent economic work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, might take charge of the Public Works and of Agriculture. Russia, as an Orthodox Power, would be peculiarly fitted to manage education and the Churches. France, which is already interested in the Ottoman Bank, might take charge of Finance. Italy, as the Power which organised the Cretan gendarmerie, might be made responsible for Public Order. England, utilising her Egyptian experience, might control the Courts and the local administration. These, of course, are tentative suggestions and are put forward merely to illustrate the main idea. What is important is that the European Minister should enjoy absolute and untrammelled authority, subject only to the general approval of his colleagues and his Government. He should have complete freedom to choose his own staff from his own or other European States (including those of the Balkan peninsula), or from native elements.

<sup>1</sup> The Board of Financial Control would require very little remodelling to become such a Ministry as I propose.



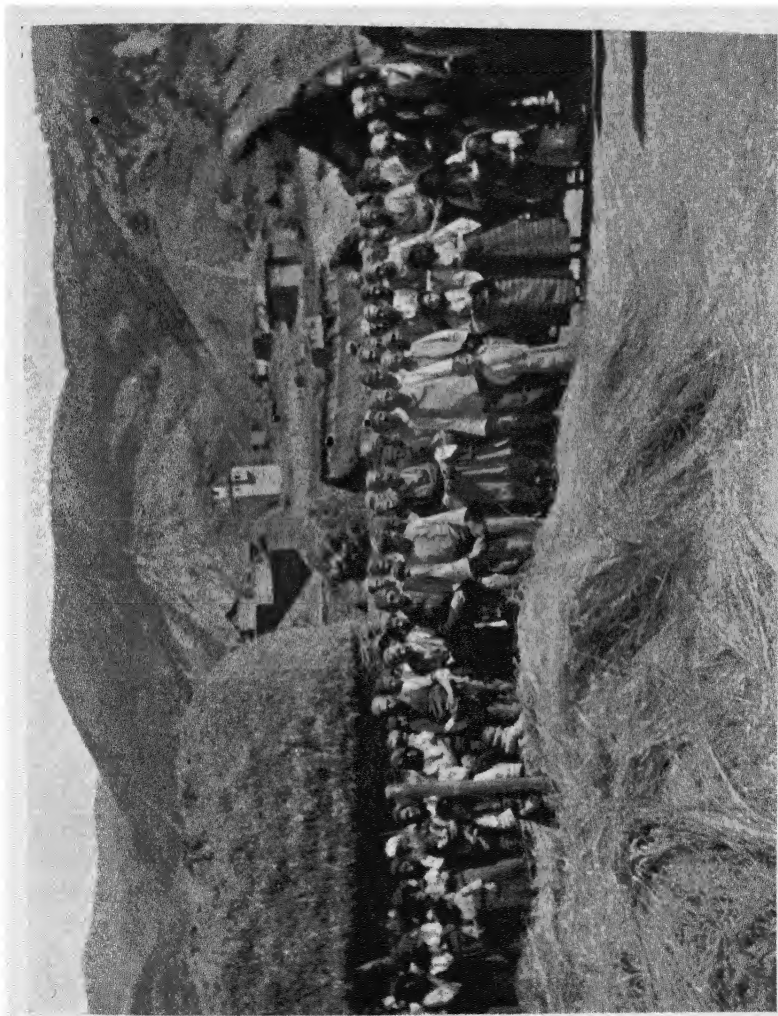
6. It would, I think, be a mistake to attempt at the beginning any imitation of Parliamentary Government. Under actual conditions a Parliament would merely be a battlefield between rival races, and would do no useful work. On the other hand, even the peasants have an ancient tradition of local self-government. In each village there should be, as at present, a small council of elders and a headman elected by a manhood suffrage.<sup>1</sup> This Council would stand between the peasants and the Administration, arrange the details of taxation, manage the school and the local communications, act as a tribunal of the first instance in small disputes, and assist in the preservation of order.

For all these concrete offices the peasants in their humble and practical way are quite competent. It would be natural and easy to group the villages in Districts corresponding more or less to the present *Nahiës*, and to form District Councils composed of one or more elders from each village. To preside over the Districts, I think the Council might be trusted to elect a local President,<sup>2</sup> instead of the Mudir, usually some insignificant clerk, who at present represents the Turkish bureaucracy. The President would act as a sort of police magistrate. The Macedonian peasant has as yet no developed national outlook, but he is keenly concerned about the affairs of his own district, and an arrangement of this sort would satisfy his wish for self-government, and educate him in the real affairs which ought to be the concern of Governments.

It might be well to summon the District Presidents two or three times a year for a few days at a time to a sort of national Deliberative Assembly. Their experience would be useful. They would gain fresh ideas by contact with their colleagues and their superiors. They would have the right to speak for the peasants who elected them. But since they would be chosen primarily to act as judges and local administrators, they would probably not be drawn

<sup>1</sup> The Turkish plan of a property qualification is to be avoided, for it merely makes in every hamlet a close and corrupt oligarchical clique.

<sup>2</sup> The Slav communes before the Turkish conquest were grouped in this way under elected chiefs called Djupans.



A VILLAGE CONCLAVE IN THE OCHRIDA DISTRICT



from the agitator type, which might come to the front if any system of direct election for a purely parliamentary purpose were to be attempted too early.<sup>1</sup>

7. The maintenance of order would be in the hands of a highly disciplined gendarmerie consisting of native elements both Christian and Moslem, officered by Europeans. It would be an expensive force, and for that reason should not be too large. To supplement it, it might be useful to expand the traditional system of rural guards (*bekchi*) into a kind of non-professional auxiliary force. Every village might select five to ten of its young men, who would be armed with rifles and possibly required to undergo some elementary training.<sup>2</sup> They should not be expected to perform ordinary police duties, or, indeed, to act at all on their own initiative; and they should remain peasants and civilians, busied with their fields. But until the country is quite settled, its feuds appeased, and brigandage suppressed, they would form a useful and inexpensive local force, which might be called upon by the headman to resist a sudden inroad of brigands or to repel an invasion of *bashi-bazouks*, or summoned by a patrolling gendarme to assist him in any perilous duty. Apart from these village guards, the population, whether Moslem or Christian, should be forbidden to own or carry rifles.

8. The Turkish army should be reduced to modest proportions, and should consist entirely of local levies. Its commander should be subordinated to the civil Governor-General, and it should be paid and provisioned at the expense of Macedonia—an arrangement which might take the place of an Imperial tribute. If Macedonia paid its own share of the army and met its existing obligations to the Ottoman Public Debt, it ought not to be required to do more for the Empire.

With these restrictions the army would be useful. It

<sup>1</sup> The discontent in Crete under Prince George's bureaucratic administration is a warning against the risk of refusing local self-government.

<sup>2</sup> The Turks themselves maintained a force of this sort under the name of *Armatoles* up till the Greek War of Independence.

would give confidence to the local Moslems, and save the Sultan from too galling a loss of prestige. At the same time, if it were mainly employed to watch the Albanian border, it would contribute to the prevention of raiding and brigandage.

9. It is unnecessary to say much about the actual reforms which a European Ministry would find it necessary to carry out. The system of tithe-farming would be abolished at once. Some very drastic agrarian legislation would be inevitable, and if funds could be obtained, the best plan would be to buy out all the landlords and settle their estates upon peasant-proprietors before the price of land has time to rise. Many of the *beys* have no title-deeds, and nearly all of them obtained their lands by violence. They are not capitalists—the peasants supply not only the labour but the beasts and the implements. It would be equitable to buy out their rights at a comparatively low figure. Another difficult problem is raised by the position of the Churches, which exercise many of the functions that belong to the Civil Courts in any developed State. The Churches are the great forcing-beds of racial intolerance, and the more they can be restricted to purely spiritual duties the better will it be alike for religion and for social peace. A university college where young men of all races and creeds could be trained together under European professors might do much, as Midhat Pasha saw, to break down the barriers which at present divide Moslems and Christians, Greeks and Bulgarians. That the young men of promise should be caught up by one national propaganda or the other, and encouraged to study in Sofia or in Athens, is an arrangement which tends to intensify local feuds. It is by its success in grappling with such questions as these that an International Control will be judged. If it fails to solve the agrarian question, the men who are fighting to-day to destroy Turkish rule will find no difficulty in converting their revolutionary Committee into a formidable Land League, which will make war upon the *beys* with all the old violent methods—boycott, arson, and murder.

On the whole, I think this the most formidable danger which Macedonia has to face. The racial feud will tend to disappear as soon as the Turks cease to ferment it. Moreover, it must be remembered that the "Greek" faction is, except in the South, a wholly artificial party. It consists of Slavs, Albanians, and half-Hellenised Vlachs, who favour it largely because the Turks treat it with partiality. If it were perfectly safe and perfectly respectable for these people to profess themselves Bulgarians, Albanians, or Vlachs, few of them in the long run would hesitate to do so. The Greek interest will tend to dwindle, save in the South and in the towns, with the disappearance of the old type of intriguing and persecuting Pasha. When that happens, the Bulgarians will be, in all the northern and central districts, in a position of uncontested predominance. If they display a reasonable amount of tact and tolerance the feud will die of itself.

10. It would obviate much injustice, and help to disentangle the present confusion of races, if a Land Commission were instituted to facilitate exchanges. All the Balkan races, save the Bulgarians, have the migratory habit. Albanians dissatisfied with the new *régime* might prefer to return to Albania. Slavs left stranded in an unreformed Albania would certainly wish to emigrate to Macedonia. Within Macedonia itself, and even within the Bulgarian principality, there are, doubtless, Greeks who would like to leave a Slav district and settle in an area where they could speak their own tongue and be governed by men of their own race. The more such exchanges were encouraged the less risk would there be of racial friction. There is certain to be a stampede of the worse type of Turks from a reformed Macedonia. It is important to save them from selling out at an unjust price, and at the same time to fill their places with immigrants whose case will be bettered by the transference.

The outline sketched above would be applicable with a few modifications to the whole of European Turkey—and, for that matter, to the more advanced regions of Asia Minor as well, more particularly the provinces where Armenians are numerous. But if we are to regard Macedonia as in

any sense a unit, there are certain regions which would lie outside it, for which something ought to be done without delay. The Bulgarian districts of the Adrianople vilayet are in a peculiarly pitiable position at present. They stand outside the scope of the Austro-Russian reforms, and have suffered cruelly from the campaign which Abdul Hamid has directed of late against the whole Bulgarian race. At the same time since they do not adjoin Macedonia, and are separated from it by a tract of country inhabited mainly by Mohamedans, it is difficult to include them for administrative purposes in Macedonia proper. These districts are not very extensive or very wealthy, and cannot be of any great value to the Turkish Empire. The simplest solution, since they march with the Bulgarian Principality, would be to persuade the Sultan to sell them to her in return for a fair price, which the Powers might guarantee.

The case of "Old Servia" might be treated in the same way, *i.e.*, the district lying between the Servian frontier and the Uskub-Mitrovitz railway might be bought by the Servian kingdom (see pp. 280-1).

Greece would then have a claim to purchase the Sandjak of Serfidje, which adjoins Thessaly, the coast district of Caterina, the peninsula of Chalcidicé, and the island of Thasos—regions where the population is almost wholly Greek by race, language, and sympathy.

If the Sultan manifested an insuperable reluctance to these alienations of territory, these three districts might be included provisionally in Macedonia under the general supervision of the European Ministry and the Turkish Governor-General. But they ought to have a separate and more or less autonomous administration, modelled upon the plan adopted in Macedonia proper. Their Governors should be respectively a Bulgarian, a Serb, and a Greek, subject to the control of junior European officials in each, who would act as the delegates of the Supreme International Board of Control.

The result of these rearrangements (excluding for the moment these minor districts) would be to divide European

Turkey into three great areas, in each of which the population would be fairly homogeneous.

I. *Macedonia*, which would be mainly Bulgarian, with an infusion of Albanians in the West and a smaller Greek element in the towns of the South, and a sprinkling of Vlachs everywhere.

II. *Albania*, including the present vilayets of Jannina and Scutari, with the Albanian districts of the Monastir and Uskub vilayets, would remain for separate treatment. It is too soon to decide whether the Albanians are capable of autonomy, and if they are, they ought certainly to have a decidedly monarchical and almost feudal form of government (see Chapter VIII. p. 285).

III. A third area, *Thrace*, including the southern and western portions of the Adrianople vilayet, with the peninsula of Gallipoli and the metropolitan area of Constantinople. Here the majority of the population is Mohamedan. There is a large Asiatic (Turkish) element. The Bulgarians are nearly all Pomacks—*i.e.*, Moslems. The Christians are mainly Greeks, merchants and fishermen, who do not suffer very grievously from the domestic tyranny of Turkish landlords, and betray no active disloyalty. The destinies of this area may well be postponed to some more distant crisis. It is possible that the district of Drama, which belongs ethnologically rather to this third area than to Macedonia proper, ought to be included in it.

The lapse of a few years will enable us to judge more clearly than is possible to-day what the ultimate fate of these three areas should be. It seems to me probable that in the course of a generation there will be a considerable movement of emigration from one area to another. Macedonia will probably become fairly homogeneous and overwhelmingly Bulgarian. Its Turks will move eastward to the third area, some of its Albanians may possibly drift westwards to Albania proper—though this is doubtful—its Greeks southwards to the Greek reserve. If that happens, its bureaucratic international constitution might be gradually modified, so that it would become more popular and more national,



ultimately evolving into a charter of a genuine autonomous state. The Turkish area seems to have no satisfactory future, unless after Abdul Hamid's death there should occur some revolution at Constantinople repeating Midhat Pasha's *Coup d'état* under happier conditions. Albania, before many years have passed, will either be an Austro-Italian protectorate or an independent principality. But whatever the future may hold in reserve, there is some reason to hope that the evolution of the Balkan Peninsula may proceed from stage to stage without violence and without war—provided that the Powers can agree to isolate the Macedonian problem and to solve it upon international lines.

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One contemplates such a solution as this with a sense that it is in itself as practicable as it is desirable. And yet the forces which make for it are feeble and those which oppose it deplorably powerful. We have to reckon as much with the timidity and indifference of the disinterested nations, as with the greed for territory of the two Eastern Empires. In theory I suppose there is now a consensus of opinion in England, France, and Italy that the one hope of a bloodless and humane solution rests on the slender prospect of a joint intervention undertaken by these three Liberal Powers. Austria is preoccupied by an internal crisis, Russia is broken by war and struggling to avoid revolution. And yet the certainty that neither of these Powers could offer any determined opposition to an initiative from the West, does not suffice to overcome the caution and inertia of the three peoples whose hands are free. There is too little to be gained by action, and even France under a Radical Government is content to fold her hands in face of the Macedonian anarchy, while her Ambassador threatens Abdul Hamid with the dire wrath of a humanitarian Republic if he fails to buy from the Creusot forges, the cannon destined to crush the last hopes of the Bulgarian race. Official France objects to Turkish excesses only when they are perpetrated with Krupp guns. As for ourselves, while it is thought decent to profess a perfunctory sympathy with the victims of Turkish misrule, there is

always some reservation. It is said that the affairs of Turkey are after all no concern of ours, and this ignorant repudiation sweeps away in one cold phrase the whole history of our action throughout a century, in maintaining the integrity of Turkey and lending our fleets and our armies to perpetuate the Ottoman tyranny. We did not think that the affairs of Turkey were no concern of ours in 1878, when we tore up the Treaty of San Stefano and were ready to use "the ships, the men," and "the money too" in order to prevent the liberation of Macedonia by its inclusion in a free Bulgaria. The actual situation is of our making, and the Macedonians have endured a generation of oppression because we conceived that their emancipation was inconsistent with our own Imperial interests. There are other languid excuses. It is said that the Eastern Christians are unworthy of our interest because they quarrel among themselves. Is the armed camp which calls itself Western Christendom so entirely free from racial jealousies? Or else it is urged that these noisy little peoples should keep quiet and await our leisurely decision: the majesty of Europe cannot allow its hands to be forced. But we know in our hearts that we should do nothing whatever, unless our hands were forced. Indeed, the more we condemn the efforts of the Christians of Turkey to help themselves, the more we emphasise our own responsibilities.

There is, however, one argument against action which deserves to be weighed. It is said that any intervention might precipitate a European war. The vague fear sounds alarming, but from what quarter does the risk come? When Lord Salisbury decided that the butcher of the Armenians must be left to the vengeance of Heaven, it was of Russian opposition that we were afraid. We always are afraid of Russia when it is proposed that we should do a disinterested and generous action. We defy her only when we are engaged upon some forward move for our own aggrandisement like our last exploit in Thibet. But that particular menace is happily removed. No English statesman would venture to say to-day, that he shrank from a naval demonstration in the Mediterranean, because he

dreaded what is left of the Russian fleet. No other Power possesses either the means or the motive to resent the intervention of a Western coalition. There is, I agree, every reason to handle Turkey with tact and even with consideration. She could make no serious resistance to any European Power in her present condition, since she has no financial resources and no navy; while her army, for all its dogged courage, is not very much better in point of training, organisation, and intelligence than her civilian services. But if she were to be driven to extremities, she would undoubtedly let loose the Albanians upon Macedonia, and massacre the populations whom we sought to liberate. For that reason it would be well to make demands which she could grant without abject humiliation, and to back them up at once with some prompt and unanswerable pressure, which would allow her no leisure to organise a systematic butchery. On the whole, one is inclined to suspect that this dread of war, so far as it is sincere, springs from precedents badly analysed. There have been wars enough in the Near East to make us cautious. But in both the modern instances the cause of war was not the action, but the inaction of the Concert. Had England sincerely supported the moderate demands for the autonomy of the Slav provinces put forward by Russia at the Conference of Constantinople in 1876, there is little doubt that Abdul Hamid must have yielded, and there would have been no Russo-Turkish war. Again, had Europe occupied Crete promptly and proclaimed its autonomy, after the Canea massacres in 1896, as in the end she was obliged to do, it is fairly certain that Greece would not have committed the chivalrous folly of rushing into war. It is the procrastination and the indecision of the Concert which have endangered the peace of Europe in the past, and unless the Western Powers are prepared to force the pace in the present crisis, history is only too likely to repeat itself. There are after all two ideals of peace, a negative and a positive. The negative conception tolerates any abomination and sanctifies things as they are, provided only that the bloodshed does not come within the definition which diplomacy recognises as

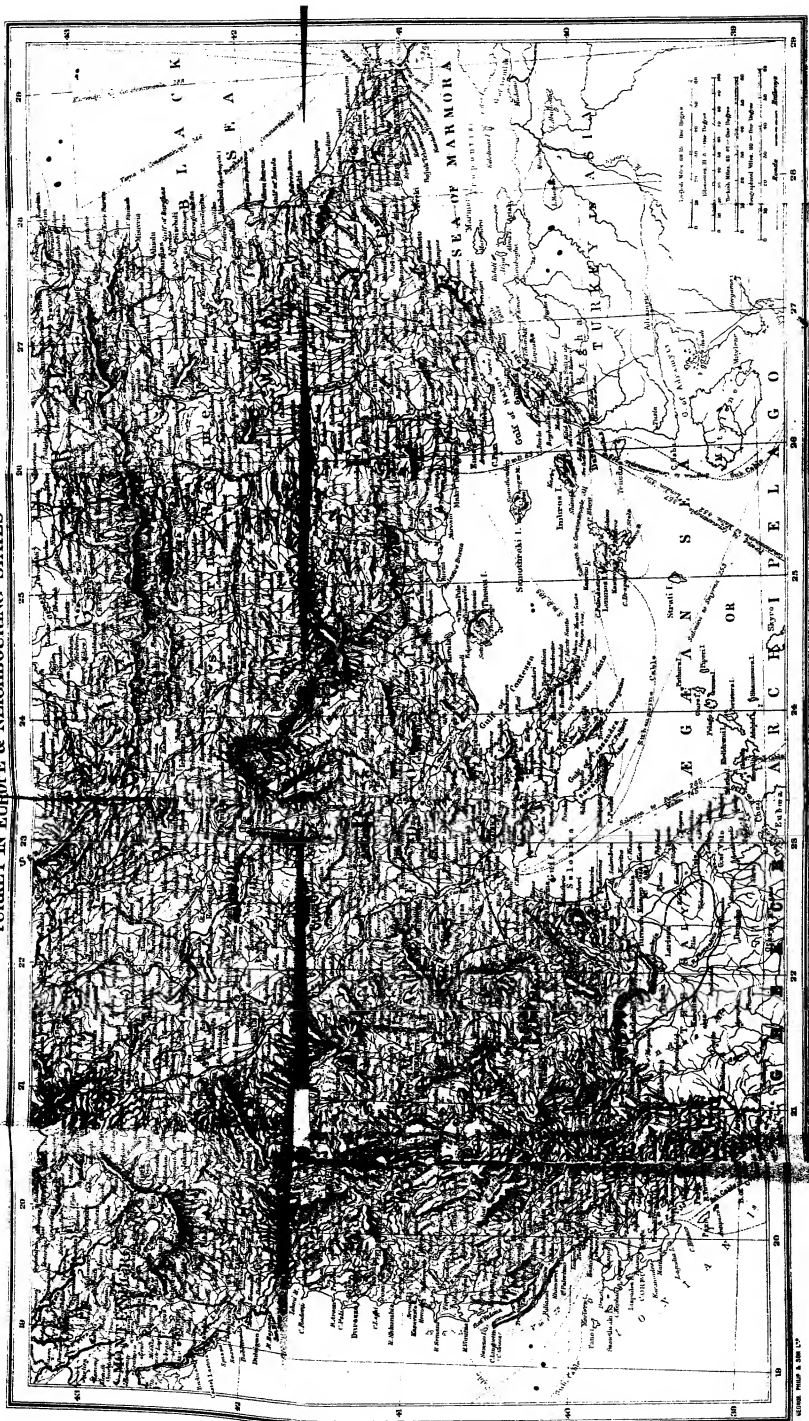
a state of formal war. Such a conception is a survival of the organised callousness of the Holy Alliance. The other conception, which excites the enthusiasm of every civilised democracy, is an ideal of co-operation. It looks for the gradual elimination of self-seeking and militarism, and it regards Europe as an association of nations animated by aims which a humane and enlightened individual would not be ashamed to avow. Of such an ideal the existence of an Oriental tyranny on the very highways of European culture and commerce is the crudest negation. From such a standpoint a state of anarchy is not a state of peace, and slaughter is no less horrible because the victims are not uniformed soldiers, but merely women and children.

To refuse to act in face of such a situation, is to take the narrowest view of national interests and European prestige. In the French Chamber M. Delcassé, speaking for the Republic, has deliberately stated that the misgovernment of the Sultan leaves to his Christian subjects "no resource save insurrection." In Constantinople, Sir Nicholas O'Connor, addressing the Sultan in the name of England, has declared in set terms that his misrule renders the existence of the Christians "intolerable." It seems scarcely credible that two great Powers, enjoying the right of intervention and claiming the guardianship of these same Christians, should hold such language and yet remain inactive. We have it in our power to do a good deed at a trivial cost to ourselves. To rescue two millions of miserable peasants from their daily purgatory, needs no greater effort than we expended to extort a petty debt from the coffers of Venezuela. For our pains we should have the knowledge that the dread of violence had passed from the life of a race which for five long centuries has tasted neither honour nor peace. In our own affairs it would be but the crisis of a season and the excitement of an hour. To the Macedonian villages it would mean the ending of a secular terror and the beginning of a new career. To the humblest cabin it would bring hope, and send free men with a new motive to their daily toil. Such an achievement a statesman might contemplate with a lofty pride—the pride

which Goethe thought the best thing in human life. One thinks of the supreme joy of the aged Faust when in his last moment from the terrace of his castle, he watched his workmen completing the dyke that wrested from the sea new homes for the multitude, and fresh fields for the plough—

“Solch ein Gewimmel möcht' ich sehn  
Auf freiem Grund mit freiem Volke stehn. •  
Zum Augenblicke dürf' ich sagen  
Verweile doch, du bist so schön.”

# TURKEY IN EUROPE & NEIGHBOURING STATES



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# INDEX TO NAMES

*For Subjects see Table of Contents*

## A

- Abdul Hamid, 7, 63, 67 (note), 135, 255, 310  
 Adrianople (revolt in), 156-57, *see* Thrace  
 Aladro, Marquis, 286  
 Albania, 88-91, chapter viii. *passim*, 330  
 Albanians, 7, 47-50 (brigandage), 81, 88-91, and chapter viii. *passim*  
 Ali Pasha of Jannina, 2, 3, 177-78, 221-22, 232-34  
*Alliance Israélite*, 82  
 Aposkepo, 11-13  
 Armensko (massacre in), 160  
 Arsof, 150  
 Asen (Vlach-Bulgarian dynasty), 96-7  
 Austria, 29; Policy in Albania, 254, 282-85; Claim in Macedonia, 293-96  
 Austro-Russian Reforms, 135, 301-4 (first scheme), 39 (note), 305-11, (second scheme)

## B

- Baktiar Pasha, 154  
 Bashi-bazouk (term explained), 145  
 Basil Bulgaroktonos, 96 (note)  
 Bektashis, 67, 243-48  
 Berlin (Treaty of), 20, 114  
 Bible Society, British and Foreign, 254  
 Bogdanes, 252  
 Bogomilism, 67, 99  
 Boletinaz, 271  
 Bosnia, 316-17  
 British policy, 298, 319, 332 *sequ.*, *see* Lansdowne  
 British trade, 293

## Z

- Bulgaria. Influence in Macedonia, 101-5; Attitude towards Revolutionary Committee, 118-21; Involved in Fate of Macedonia, 318-20  
 Bulgarians. Origin, 95; Empire, 96-9, 109 (note); Language, 101-2; Schools and Church, *see* Exarchate; Bulgarian Movement, *see* chapter v. *passim*; Feud with Greeks, 72, 129, 209-18; Relations with Vlachs, 185-86, 189  
 Bulgarophone Greeks, 199

## C

- Castoria, 11, 12, 14, 15, 83, 191-94  
 Castoria (Archbishop of), 14, 15, 63, 147, 192-94, 217  
 Castriot, George, *see* Scänderbeg  
 Castriot, John, 232  
 Catholic Sisters, 227  
 Catholic Uniate Church, 73  
 Christophorides, Constantine, 254  
 Crete, 9 (note), 17 (note), 24, 218-19, 327 (note)

## D

- Dibra, 49, 269, 281  
 Djacova, 263, 264, 266-67  
 Doiran, 140  
 Dounmé, 84  
 Dushan, 97, 274  
 Dymbeni, 161

## E

- Edhem Pasha, 8

Egypt, 3, 29 (note)

England's attitude, 292, *see* British

Exarchate, 73, 115-16

## F

Faik Bey Konitza, 254 (note)

Ferdinand, Prince, 171 (note)

Ferizovitch, 262

## G

Ghegs, 86, 91, chapter viii. *passim*

Ghica, Prince Albert, 286

Giorgis, General de, 306, 309

Gipsies, 81, 86

Goltz Pasha, Von der, 23

Gora, 275

Greeks, 7, 88, 91-5, c. 105-7, 122-24, 129-33, chapter vii. *passim*; Greek bands, 214-18; Greek Church, *see* chapter iii. *passim* and 196; Greek language, 204-9, 251-52; Greeks and Albanians, 184; Greek influence in Epirus, 230, 278; Greeks of the Isles, 218-19; Greeks and Vlachs, 181-90, 198, 215 and (note), 218 (note), *see* under Bulgarians, Castoria (Archbishop of), and Hellenism

Gregorius, Metropolitan of Monastir, 66

Groueff, Damian, 115, 150, 169, 171-72 (note)

## H

Hahn, Von, 252 (note), 254

Haireddin, Bimbashi, 145, 160

Hamid, *see* Abdul

Hellenism, 122, 132, 194 *sequ.*

Hilmi Pasha, Hussein, 12, 14, 19, 20, 28, 135, 138, 141, 300-3, 310

Hydriotes, 222

## I

Ismail Bey, 9 (note)

Ipek, 263-64

Italy and Albania, 259, 282, 295

## J

Jacova, *see* Djacova

Janissaries, 3, 244 and (note)

Jannina, *see* Ali Pashi, Roumanian Consulate, 188

Jews, 26, 82-5

## K

Kailar, 88

Kallay, Von, 317

Kilkish, 73

Kirk-killissé, 156

Kitchevo or Kirchovo, 49, 150, 151 (note)

Klissoura or Vlacho-klissura, 34, 152, 154, 176, 179

Koritza, 67, 248-62

Kossenetz, 161

Kosovo, 97, 100, 264, *see* "Old Servia"

Kruchevo, 150, 154, 176, 177

Krusje, 38, 159

Kuklish, 312

Kyrias, Gerassino, 257

Kyrias, Miss, 257-58

## L

Lansdowne, Marquis of, 292-93, 309

Latin Tongue in Macedonia, 92, 179

Levantine, 93

Lozancheff, 150

## M

Macedonia, the term, 6, 219 (note)

Macedonians, who are they? 101

Macedonians, ancient, 91, 194, 228

Malesia, 46, 49

Malko-Tirnovo, 156-57

Margariti, Apostolo, 187-88

Mavrovo, 46, 48

Messiah, *see* Sabatai

Michaelides, M., 208

Midhat Pasha, 7, 328

Milan, King, 104, 296

Millet (term explained), 62

Mirdites, 234, 237

Missions, Protestant, 74 (note), *see also* Bible Society



Mitrovitz, 267  
 Mitylene, 17, 310  
 Mogilla, 142-44  
 Mohamedans, *see* Moslems  
 Mokreni, 34, 215-16  
 Monastir, description of town, 77; mosque, 138 (note); rising in, 148, *sequ.*  
 Morlachs, 179  
 Moschopolis, 178, 253  
 Moslems, are they fanatical? 25-6; why Albanians became, 241; race and religion, 22, 80-1; claims of, 281, 323  
 Muhadjirs, 80  
 Mürzsteg scheme, 39 (note), 305 *sequ.*

Resna, 39  
 Romaic, 204-9  
 Roman Colonies, 91, 180  
 Roum Millet, 62-63  
 Roumanian Propaganda, 187-190, 218 (note), 287 (note)  
 Rostkovsky, M., 157  
 Russia, *see* Austro-Russian reforms; influence of, 19, 20, 64, 120-21; renewed interest of, in Macedonia, 291; policy in Macedonia, 296-300; her rule undesirable, 315-20; officers, 309; murdered consuls, 157-58  
 Rycaut, Sir Paul, 2

## N

Nasir Pasha, 154  
 Neocazi (massacre at), 160  
 Neveska, 152, 154, 176

## O

Ochrida, 31, 32, 49, 76, 96, 99, 109 (note B), 243  
 "Old Servia" (Kossovo), 49, 90, 97, 272, 274-77, 330  
 Omar Ruchdi Pasha, 148, 154  
 Orthodox Church, *see* chapter iii. *passim*  
 Osmanli, *see* Turks

## P

Pallis, A., 208  
 Parga, 230  
 Passvan Oglou Pasha, of Widin, 3  
 Phanar, 3 (note), 195  
 Pindus, 89  
 Pisodéri, 174 *sequ.*  
 Pomacks, 88 (note), 156, 331  
 Prizrend, 262 *sequ.*  
 Protestants, *see* Missions  
 Psichari, M., 206, 208

## R

Ragusa, 100, 232  
 Rechid Pasha, 4

## S

Sabatay Sevi, 84-5  
 Salonica, 83, 84; outrages, 135-37  
 Salonica, Vali of, 42  
 Samuel, Tsar, 98  
 San Stefano, 106, 114  
 Saraf, 73, 119, 150, 169, 171-72 (note)  
 Scanderbeg, 231-32  
 Scutari, legal code of, 263  
 Servians, 72, 97-105, 132, 230, 278, 318-320; *see* "Old Servia."  
 Shahin, 225  
 Simeon, Tsar, 96  
 Slav dialects, 85  
 Slavs, primitive, 94, 99  
 Smerdesch, 50, 144-47  
 Smilovo, 150  
 Sorovitch, 151  
 Stambuloff, 119, 210, 211 (note)  
 Suli, 222  
 Sultan, *see* Abdul Hamid  
 Svetkoff, 114, 142-44

## T

Tatarcheff, Dr., 115  
 Tchakalaroff, 145, 150, 168  
 Theodore of Elbasan, 252-53  
 Thrace, 156-57, 331; *see* Adrianople  
 Thracians, ancient, 91  
 Tirnovo, 97  
 Tosks, 86, 91; chapter viii. *passim*  
 Tournafort, 72 (note)  
 Treska, 55-56  
 Tricoupis, 174, 211

Tzoncheff, General, 134, 171-72 (note)  
 Turks, the race, chapter i. *passim* ; 80-82 ;  
     Osmanli settlements, 87-88 ; the term,  
     222-23 ; "Young Turks," 29, 247, 256

## U

Uniate, *see* Catholic  
 Uskub, 85

## V

Vincent de Paul, Sisters of, 227

Vlachs, *see* chapter vi. *passim*, 85, 86, 91,  
 242 ; early state, 97 (note). Church,  
 72 ; in Epirus, 230 ; Albanian propa-  
 ganda, 287 (note) ; *see* Greeks and  
 Vlachs

## W

Wallachians, *see* Vlachs

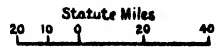
## Y

Yankoff, Colonel, 171 (note)

## Z

Zagoritchani, 216-17

# ETHNOGRAPHICAL MAP OF MACEDONIA



## Reference

SLAVS		Bulgarians.		Greeks.
		Servians.		Albanians.
		Pomaks (i.e. Mohamedan Bulgarians)		Turks.
				Vlachs.



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